EERIE
#25
JAN
EERIE
A WARREN MAGAZINE
Illustrated Horror & Mystery await you in SOUTHERN EXPOSURE
Plus: THING IN THE CAVE! MISTAKE! ISLE OF VRYKLAKAS!
STERANKO
50¢

(SLURP!) .... LOOKS LIKE I'M **FLESH** OUT OF **PINK** LEMONADE, **FLUID DRUIDS**....BUT TRY SOME OF THIS PULMONARY PROTEIN FOR A TASTE TREAT! GUARANTEED TO GET YOU INTO THE **RED** IF YOU'RE TURNING **BLUE**....**AND**, ABSOLUTELY NO **FANG**OVER. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, WHY NOT ASK OUR HOSTESS FOR ONE OF HER CORPUSCLE COCKTAILS AS WE MEET HER IN THIS ISSUE'S....

EERIE MONSTER GALLERY

VAMPIRE!

SQUEALS OF STARVING RODENTS ASSAIL YOUR SENSES, THE SPUTTERING CANDLE TORCH CASTING ONLY FUTILE BEAMS INTO THE DARKNESS. THIS MUST LEAD TO THE CRYPTS... THIS FILTHY STAIRWAY THAT PROCEEDS YOU! YOU FORCE YOUR LEGS TO WALK YOU, AND YOU GAG TO HOLD WITHIN YOU EVERY FEELING OF REVULSION YOU CAN TASTE. FURTHER.... DOWN INTO THE REEKING CLOAK OF LIGHTLESS VELVET THAT SURROUNDS YOU!

LOOK THERE! JUST BEYOND YOU IN THAT CRYPT LIES A FIGURE ENSHROUDED IN BLACK. SEE HER IN THE PALE BLUE FLAMES OF EACH SHRINKING CANDLE ...HER EYES DO NOT FLUTTER! HER LIPS DO NOT MOVE! HOW DEATHLY SOFT HER HAIR FALLS 'ROUND HER POOLS OF INKY FABRIC TO SURROUND HER ASHEN FACE. WAIT! IS THAT A SOB I HEAR HER LIPS RELEASE?

SHE STANDS BEFORE YOU NOW, MEMBRANES OF VELVET CLINGING TO HER ARMS, SWAYING IN THE TRANCE OF DEATH-LESS METAMORPHOSIS. SEE HOW DEATH HANGS UPON HER BODY, SUFFOCATING BOTH YOUR EYES IN FEAR MIRAGES! DO NOT BE FRIGHT-ENED-SHE SEEKS THE WARM THROB OF LIVING FLUID-YOUR BLOODLESS VEINS DO NOT INTEREST HER!

THE DEAD DO NOT FEAR THE UNDEAD! SO YOU WATCH HER DISSOLVE INTO SHADOWS OF AIR MISTS ...RAPPING SOUNDS OF STIFF WINGS SLAP-PING INTO ECHOES FAR BEYOND YOU. TONIGHT THERE WAITS BENEATH THE SHREIKING MID-NIGHT, UNKNOWING OF HIS FATE, SOME POOR MORTAL WHO WILL CURSE HIS FATE FOREVER. FOR SOON HE SATISFIES **VAMPIRA**... SOON HIS BLOOD WILL FLOW MIXED IN HER BLOATED VEINS. TONIGHT HE BECOMES THE UNDEAD. TONIGHT STRIKES THE **VAMPIRE**

ART BY TONY WILLIANSUNE /STORY BY BILL PARENTE

EERIE

NO. 25

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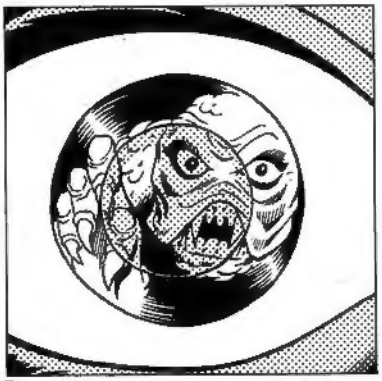

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DEAR COUSIN EERIE

"Frazetta . . .sure can draw pretty girls"

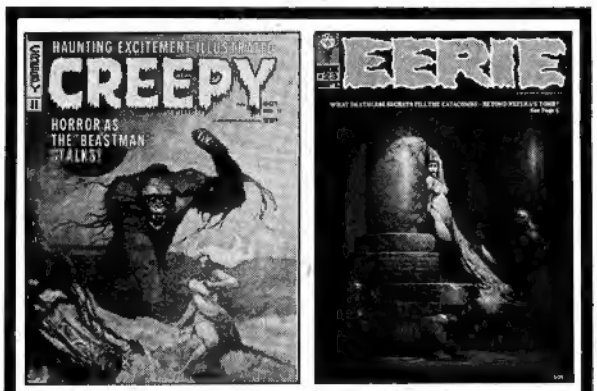
Gruesome issue 23 just takes the blood often the vampire's tooth! Not only have your gruesome fear fables topped Unc's fairy tales, but that eye-popping Frazetta cover would set Richard Burton's mouth watering. Glad you were the one to capture that rare trophy—a friezed frank fear facit—a real gem! My favorite stories, in order of favor bestowed, were: Beyond Nefara's Tomb, Soul Pool and Space Age Vampire. But why the rehash of An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge? You were doing so well. But, as I said before, issue #23 was the best in a long time. As an admirer of good art and good stories, I can remember picking up your magazine (and CREEPY, too) and truly looking forward to "a journey in terror," and "into the unknown." But you must admit that reprints are no journey into the unknown! CREEPY states that his tales are by "the world's greatest comic artists." I'm not saying your artists aren't good, but let's face it, Frazetta should be a regular. And what happened to Crandell, Williamson and Jeff Jones? Also Neal Adams and the other short-lived greats. Your readers miss them. I hate to repeat myself, but if your magazine can, so can I: With a true art treasure like that Frazetta cover, it seems the interiors could be also. I think your Cauldron Contest was the best idea ever, and the first issue with a winner could have been a winner itself, but you had to ruin it with reprints. I really think if you used interior color it would liven up the issues. Please put it to a vote. Some artists are never noticed until their work is seen in color. I didn't think Al Williamson was very good until I saw his colored work in Flash Gordon.

STEVEN CURTIS
Kirksville, Mo.

I talked with our Accountant, a stiff-necked Transylvanian, about that color business. He says we're using too much red ink around here as it is. Go ahead and vote on it if you want to. But let me warn you now: It's tough to convince a Transylvanian Accountant.

I hope you can persuade Mr. Frazetta to do more covers. I also hope that you'll start having all new stories and somehow get new artists. If you keep reprinting stories, you won't have any left for your Yearbook.

MARK LANIER
Richmond, Va.



A Real Frazetta Gem! . . . But not as good as this one?

We have a persuader hard at work on Mr. Frazetta down in the dungeons. But if he persuades too hard, how are we going to get new artists? I think his methods are working though. The latest word is that as soon as Frank's wounds heal, we'll get some more covers out of him.

If you think this is a letter of complaint, you bet it is! Not about you, dear cousin, but about the ones who write complaining about repeats. Of course you have repeats! If you didn't, you'd have a pretty lousy magazine. I mean, in order to have good stories you need time. I know you can't write 6 or 7 stories in 2 months. Take for instance Fair Exchange. It takes a lot of work to conjure up something like that. Soul Pool was something. An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge was groovy. Not to mention A Dragon's Tail! And Beyond Nefera's Tomb — Wow! Parente has his noggin' knockin'. Fanfare was pretty good, too. But those letters! Yecch!

TIMOTHY CASEY
Roslindale, Mass.

Hard-working though I may be, I don't write these stories. I live them. Right now, I'm working on those anti-reprint letters. Seems the best way to eliminate them is to cut down on reprints. Our dear friend Uncle Creepy wanted to eliminate the letter-writers. But I think we've got him convinced by now.

I recently bought the newest EERIE and CREEPY and was surprised you got Frazetta back to do the covers. After all, why would a great artist like Frank work for a steadily failing magazine? I really mean it. At first CREEPY was as great as it could get. You had Frazetta, Williamson, Torres, Crandall. Now look. Nobody. Anymore your books are only buying for the covers. And who knows how long you'll keep Frazetta? And please, no more reprints. I'm sick of them. Let's make the name Warren like it used to be.

DARYL COTTON
Moundsville, W. Va.

Who cares about Warren? It's EERIE I'm worried about. You're right when you say Creepy is a steadily failing magazine. I've said that for years. But did you notice whose picture was at the top of that great Frazetta cover?

Frazetta's cover on issue #23 wasn't his greatest, but it was the best since issue #11. I believe that he is the most exciting cover artist in the world. But why not have him do an inside story? Not counting the reprints, the best story, both in plot and art, was A Dragon's Tale. One last question: Do we have to pay a membership to join EERIE'S fanfare?

NICK MOUKTEROS
London, Ontario

I asked our Transylvanian Accountant about that Fanfare business. He said nobody has to pay unless they want their stuff printed in color. On the way back from his office, I talked to the persuader down in the dungeon. He says he'll try to persuade Frank Frazetta to do an inside story. But don't count on it. They both looked tired.

I have bought EERIE #23 and I have to admit the cover's alright. I'd like to credit Frank Frazetta. He sure can draw pretty girls. The best stories in this issue were Fair Exchange. Space Age Vampire. But An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge I saw once in the Twilight Zone with Rod Serling.

ANGEL CAMPES
Springfield Gardens, N.Y.

Is Rod Serling reprinting our material? Everybody wants to get into the act! Frazetta does draw pretty girls. He even made that upstart Vampirella look good.

Your magazine has finally gotten too scary for me at 50c apiece. I'm afraid you have driven me to Weird, Tales From The Tomb and Shock because they are all very good at 35c a copy. I know you probably have to charge more because you don't sell as many as the others.

JERRY FINKSTEIN
Elkhart, Indiana

Our Accountant says they charge less because they give less.

Usually you say you have some of the best comic artists in the field. But I haven't seen Mort Drucker or George Woodbridge in your magazine.

RONNIE ANTEROINEN
Mc Lean, Va.

Mort says that if he could stand the sight of blood he'd have been a doctor. But maybe we can come

"EERIE would be great if you'd make the covers better..."

up with something to his liking. He's been hanging out with madmen for a long time. Send a letter to Drucker and Woodbridge up on Madison Avenue. You might just convince them.

Up until the recent magazines that you have published, the covers were pretty good. Not to mention about your prices—they have gone up pretty high. Now, the price wouldn't be too bad if you would print an extra story or two. Getting back to your covers. I will have to say they're pretty trashy, like my mother says. Especially #22 and #23. My cousins, friends and I all feel the same way about this. We're all thinking about changing over to getting paperback books. You would probably would lose my two cousins who are both subscribers. Not only would you lose these three customers, but probably many more. Last week, a boy was looking at EERIE #23. He said he would have to quit buying EERIE because his mother fussed on him for buying a magazine with such a trashy-looking cover on it. I think you'd sell a lot more if you'd make the covers better looking.

DAVID McTAGGART
Baton Rouge, La.

Maybe you never put it quite that way before. Now we have more room for letters and we'd like to have more letters to print. Even if you don't love your old cousin, you don't have to keep it to yourself.

I have just read your latest issue. It was great. But I am disappointed in one thing. I like animals.' You have people, monsters, werewolves, vampires and ghosts, but I never see a scary animal story. Why not have a ghost dog or a hynotising cat or a demon horse. Anything! Here is a suggestion for a story: Why not have a vampire who gets lonely and has a vampire cat or dog. They can be monsters just as easy as a human can. These stories have the same routine. You know the routine before you get there. I'm just being honest. It's like the cowboy always getting the girl. In this case the good guy is a monster, except the good guy is an anmial. I'm taking commercial art and maybe I can get into the eerie world before long.

LINDA HUNT
Colorado Springs, Colo.

What do you think Fan Fare is for? If you have a good idea for a story, write it. If you can draw, draw it. If its any good, you'll see it in Fan Fare.

After a lag of several issues, EERIE has again picked itself up and become a fine example of the field. Again four new stories but of those four, only three rated. Frazetta's cover was fantastic. That guy really lends; class to everything he does. Unfortunately, the cover story was terrible, hard to follow and wasn't helped much by Colon's unusual sloppiness. The Dragon's Tail was well done. Good script and art. Now, the finest story in the issue, Soul Pool: French did a fantastic story and Sutton's art improved greatly. It has been pretty bad lately. The final new story, Space Age Vampire was equally well-done. If Royer would spend more time on facial characteristics and less on background detail, hed be a most worthy artist. All in all, a fine issue. Hope there will be more.

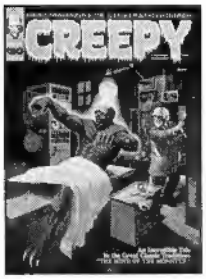
ROGER GUBUDING
Bradley, Ill.

The persuader was working with Tom, but he's all healed up now and getting better all the time.

Want to write us?
Address your poison pen letters to:
EERIE LETTERS,
22 E. 42nd St., N.Y.C. 10017

CAN YOUR MAILMAN TAKE IT ????

SURE HE CAN! AND YOU CAN PROVE IT FOR YOURSELF. JUST MAIL THIS COUPON FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS TO ANY OF THE TERRORIFIC WARREN MAGAZINES. THEN RELAX. YOUR MAILMAN WILL DO THE REST. YOUR MAGS WILL ARRIVE SAFE IN A STRONG ENVELOPE... AND YOU'LL DIE OF PLEASURE!!



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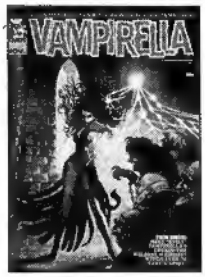

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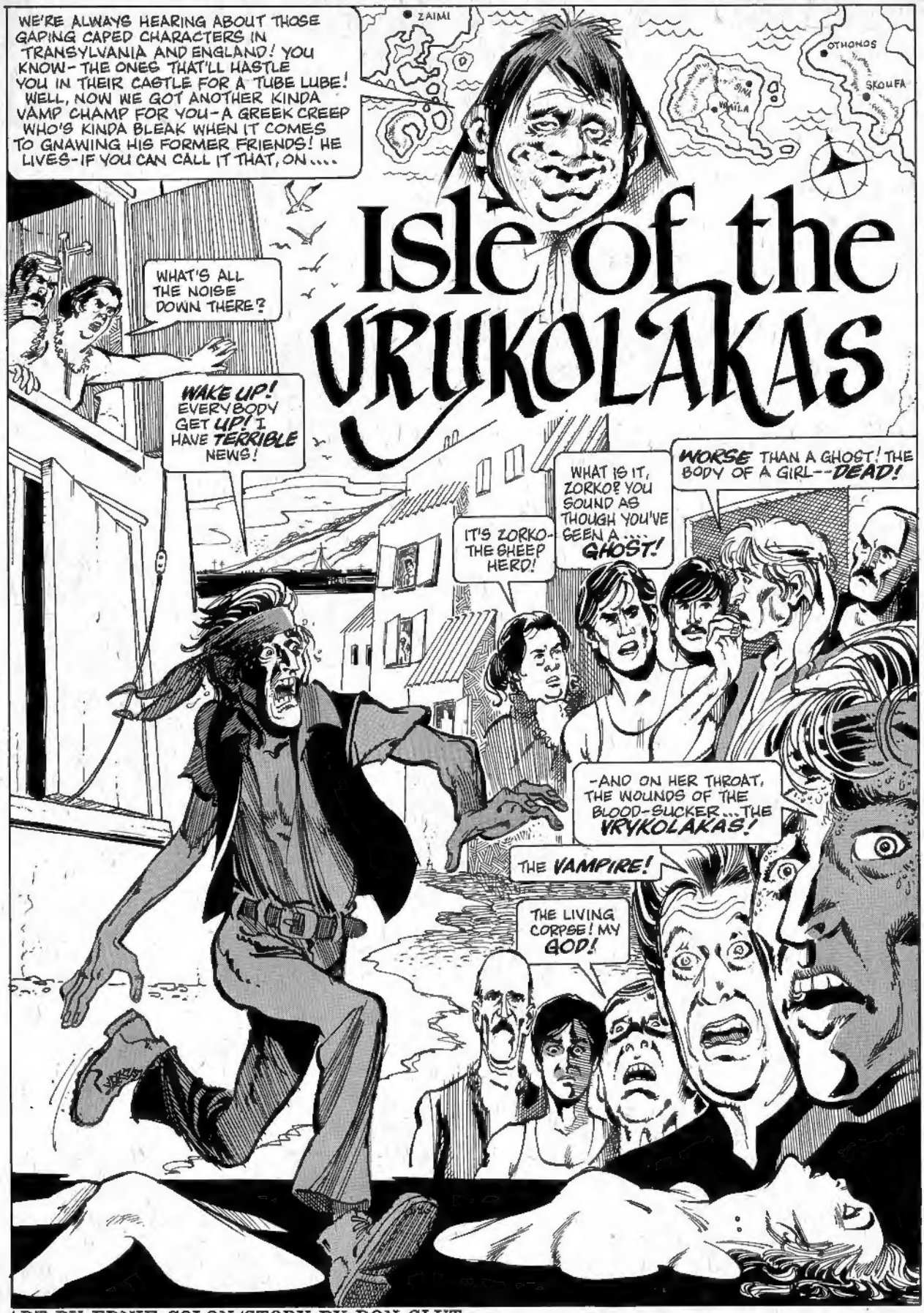
SOME OF THE ISLANDS OF MODERN GREECE HAVE MANAGED TO DEFY THE EFFECTS OF PROGRESS... A SHIP DOCKS ON POLADOURIS WITCH A CARGO THAT IS WELCOMED ONLY BY TEARS....
MY SON...MY SON! WHY DID HE HAVE TO DIE? HE WAS SO YOUNG.....
IT'S A PITY YOUNG BASIL DYING - AND DURING HIS TRAVELS ABOUT THE WORLD!
DIED ON THAT HEATHEN ISLAND OF A FILTHY TROPICAL DISEASE!
YOU DON'T THINK...?
THERE IS ALWAYS THE DANGER!
...THE DANGER THAT THE DEAD MAY....
-RETURN!
THUS BEGAN THE PLAGUE OF POLADOURIS!
ERNIE



ART BY ERNIE COLON/STORY BY DON GLUT

"I SAW THE MONSTER WITH MY OWN EYES... STOOPED OVER HIS VICTIM - SATING HIS GHASTLY THIRST WITH HER BLOOD... IT WAS HORRIBLE! TO ACTUALLY SEE A VRYKOLAKAS!
HAVING SEEN ME AFTER COMPLETING ITS MONSTROUS FEAST, THE CREATURE FLED INTO THE NIGHT....
IT WAS SATURDAY DAWN - AS WE KNOW, THE VRYKOLAKAS MAY ONLY REST IN HIS GRAVE ON THAT HOLY DAY....
-ALTHOUGH I DID NOT FOLLOW IT, I ASSUME THE VAMPIRE TOOK REFUGE IN HIS TOMB....
WHERE IT LAY AS A SWOLLEN LEECH, BLOATED ON THE BLOOD OF ITS VICTIM!"
A VRYKOLAKAS IS AMONG US....

-THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO DESTROY IT- CREMATION! WHILE IT SLEEPS IN ITS GRAVE!
WAIT, ZORKO! WE CAN'T JUST BURN A CORPSE WITHOUT EVIDENCE!
NO! WE CANNOT START A PANIC IN TOWN ON YOUR WORD!
THEN FOLLOW ME! I'LL SHOW YOU!
THERE! I SPOKE THE TRUTH!
BUT ZORKO-THERE ARE MANY CORPSES IN THE GRAVES OF POLADOURIS! ANY ONE COULD BE THE VRYKOLAKAS!
YES, ZORKO- WHERE WOULD WE EVEN BEGIN TO LOOK!
I THINK I KNOW- BUT FIRST WE MUST VISIT....
THE PRIEST! WE MUST SPEAK WITH HIM FIRST!
A VRYKOLAKAS! IN POLADOURIS! BUT WHOM DO YOU SUSPECT TO BE THE MONSTER?
I KNOW IT IS BASIL! IT CANNOT BE ANYONE ELSE!
BASIL? -BUT HOW?
IF IT IS BASIL, HIS CORPSE WILL SHOW NO SIGN OF DECAY! IT WILL BE FRESH AND LIFE-LIKE, EXCEPT FOR THE SHRIVELLED OUTER SKIN-BUT WE MUST BE SURE!

DON'T WORRY! IF YOU WON'T BURN THE BODY, I WILL! AND ACCEPT THE GUILT ON MY OWN SOUL- THE VRYKOLAKAS ATTACKED ONLY AFTER BASIL WAS SHIPPED HOME! IT IS HIM!
NO! IN FORTY DAYS MANY OF OUR PEOPLE COULD DIE! EVEN YOU, FATHER, COULD BECOME A BLOODY MEAL FOR THE MONSTER!
I THINK WE SHOULD WAIT THE FORTY DAYS PRESCRIBED BY OUR CHURCH, ZORKO - TO ALLOW THE BODY TO DECOMPOSE NATURALLY, THEN SEE!
ZORKO IS RIGHT! I'M AFRAID!
YES! OPEN THE DOOR!
REMEMBER, IF THE CORPSE OF BASIL SHOWS NO SIGNS OF ROT, IT MUST BE BURNED!
HEAVEN PRAY FOR US!
UGH! THAT FOUL ODOR! NEVER SMELLED SO MUCH DECAY BEFORE!
IT'S OPEN! NOW IF I'M CORRECT, HIS BODY WILL BE FRESH- AND FILLED WITH THE BLOOD OF LAST NIGHT'S VICTIM- OOPH!
AAAGH!!
THE SMELL! I CAN'T STAND IT- UUGHH...
CREEAK-
GOOD SAINTS ABOVE!! HE MUST HAVE BEEN DEAD ON THOSE ISLANDS LONGER THAN WE DREAMED!!
YOU CANNOT BURN THIS ONE, ZORKO!
NO! I WAS-UGH- HORRIBLY MISTAKEN!

THAT NIGHT... A TERROR FILLED AND CONFUSED ZORKO TRIES TO TAKE HIS MIND OFF THAT AFTERNOON'S EXPERIENCE-
IT'S INSANE! THE VRYKOLAKAS HAS TO BE BASIL! NO ONE HAS DIED IN THE VILLAGE FOR MONTHS!
MIDNIGHT- IT'S NO LONGER SATURDAY, WHEN THE MONSTER IS BOUND TO HIS GRAVE! THE VRYKOLAKAS WILL BE PROWLING AGAIN!
CREEAK-
WHO'S THAT? SOMEONE OPENING MY DOOR!
VRYKOLAKAS!
B-BUT NO- BASIL! YOU CAN'T BE- YOU'RE ROTTED! YOU CAN'T BE THE-
OH, BUT I AM, ZORKO--
I HAVE NOT DECOMPOSED SINCE DEATH! THIS IS THE WAY I LOOKED WHEN I DIED! I WAS IN THE TROPICS A LONG TIME, ZORKO - LONG ENOUGH TO DEVELOP A SEVERE CASE OF... LEPROSY!
LOOKS AS IF RAZZLE BASIL'S GONNA GET A GREECY MEAL, EH? AND THAT LEAKY GREEK AIN'T GONNA SPEAK OUT AGAINST OUR FAVORITE KINDS OF CREED PEOPLE, ANYMORE! FED UP WITH THE WHOLE MESS, I'D SAY - ISLE BE SEA - IN YOU!

END

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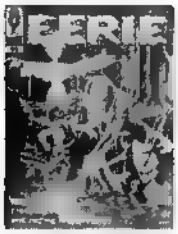

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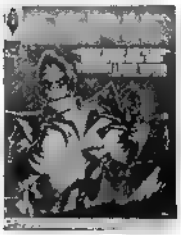

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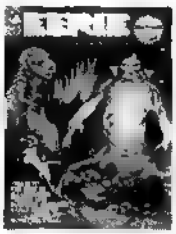

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PROLOGUE: THE TIME IS THE ROARING TWENTIES AND THIS IS A SPEAKEASY. SOMETIMES THERE IS A HALF-HEARTED POLICE RAID. ALWAYS THERE IS ***EXCITEMENT***, AND, ALMOST ALWAYS, THERE IS ***VIOLENCE***...

NO! PETE! NOOOOOO...

HERE YA GO, ***EDDIE BOY!*** DA BOSS SAID I SHOULD GIVE YA DIS!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, A PHONE BOOTH MUFFLES THE CLANG OF DISTANT POLICE WAGONS.

HELLO, ***BOSS?*** YEAH, IT'S ME, PETE!

LEPHONE

SHEATHED IN THE COPPER-CORED PHONE LINES, THE WORDS MOVE THOUGHT-FAST OVER THE WINTERED STREETS OF ***CHICAGO*** TO THE OFFICE OF MOB BOSS ***JOE VENANTI***...

YOU'RE A GOOD BOY, PETE! BEST ***HIT MAN*** I GOT!

THE MURDER OF FAT EDDIE, THE EASTSIDE BOSS, IS CAUSE TO ***CELEBRATE***...

DRINK UP, ***ANGELO!*** YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT THE MAN THAT'S GOT HALF THE CITY IN HIS POCKET!

RIGHT, BOSS! YOU GOT 'EM RUNNIN' SCARED! ***EVEN CAPONE!***

BUT JOE VENANTI HADN'T ALWAYS BEEN CALLED BOSS OR EVEN JOE! TO HIS EMIGRANT MOTHER, HE HAD BEEN...

JOSEPH! JOSEPH! JUST A LITTLE BOY AND ALREADY YOU STEAL!

AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER, JOSEPH BECAME...

HEY, ***JOEY!*** LET'S SCRAM! I THINK YA ***KILLED*** THAT NIGHT WATCHMAN!

AND FINALLY, THROUGH A LONG AND SORDID PROCESS, JOEY THE PUNK HAD EVOLVED INTO WHAT HE WAS NOW, AN IGNOBLE PRODUCT OF THAT NOBLE EXPERIMENT -- PROHIBITION...

PAPER! GET YOUR PAPER! GRAND JURY INDITES VENANTI!

DAILY BUGLE
GRAND JURY INDITES VENANTI

ART BY BILL BLACK/STORY BY BUDDY SAUNDERS

JOE BECAME AWARE OF ***BLACKNESS***, THE KIND ONLY A BLIND MAN CAN KNOW! THEN ***SILENCE***, LIKE THE SOUNDLESS ***ROARING*** IN A ***VACUUM***...

AND ***CONFINEMENT*** PRESSING IN FROM ALL SIDES LIKE THE WEIGHT OF HEAVEN AND HELL. AND LAST, THE FEEL OF SOFT ***VELVET***, AND OPULENT, SMOTHERING ***SILKS***...

JOE YENANTI ***SCREAMED***...

EEEEAAAARGH!

THE SCREAM HELPED, BUT HIS THOUGHTS CONTINUED TO ***CRAWL*** UP THE INSIDE OF HIS SKULL LIKE ***FRIGHTENED SPIDERS!***

NO! NOOOOO...

GOD! NOW I REMEMBER! THE DRUG... WEARING OFF...

HE CRUSHED THEM WITH A BRICK OF MENTAL DESPERATION...

JOE'S TREMBLING HANDS MEASURED THE LIMITS OF THE ***SARCOPHAGUS***...

...I'LL BE OKAY NOW.. JUST WAIT... A FEW ***HOURS*** ...***TONIGHT!***

MIDNIGHT! THEY SHOULD'VE BEEN HERE! ***WHAT'S KEEPING THEM!?!***

ETERNITY SEEMED TO PASS— JOE REMEMBERED HIS POCKET WATCH. HE DUG IT FROM HIS JACKET, OPENED THE GLASS FACING AND FELT THE SLIVERS OF METAL THAT DENOTED ABSTRACTED HOURS AND MINUTES...

OUTSIDE, THE DAWN WAITED WHILE JOE, TRAPPED IN BLACKNESS, TRIED TO ESCAPE THE STONE COFFIN...

IT'S GOTTA GIVE... IT'S GOTTA!

BUT THE *COFFIN LID* WAS TERRIBLY *HEAVY* SO THAT IT SEEMED CLAMPED IN PLACE! IT DIDN'T GIVE!

I'VE BEEN *DOUBLE-CROSSED!* THEY'VE LEFT ME TO *DIE*... TO *ROT* LIKE A *MAGGOT!*

THE MOBSTER'S MIND FLED A WEEK INTO THE PAST! REMEMBERING HELPED KEEP THE MADNESS OUT OF HIS *BRAIN!*

GOOD TO BE *HOME*, UH JOE?

HA, HA! VERY FUNNY, *ANGE!* THIS DUMP OF A BERG?

THE VILLAGE WHERE JOE HAD BEEN BORN REALLY WASN'T MUCH, BUT, AS WITH EVERYTHING, JOE HAD A USE FOR IT--AN *ANGLE*...

IT AIN'T MUCH, BOYS, BUT IT'S A NICE PLACE TO *DIE!* LET'S SEE THE *FEDS* TRY TO *DEPORT A CORPSE!*

HA, HA!

RELAXING IN THE VILLAGE INN, THE MOBSTERS FOUND THE SUPERSTITIOUS VILLAGERS TO BE A SOURCE OF CYNICAL AMUSEMENT...

BUT, SEÑOR, IT'S TRUE! A *VAMPIRE DOES* HAUNT OUR VILLAGE BY NIGHT!

AW, YER *NUTS!* I DON'T BELIEVE IN THEM *BLOOD SUCKIN'* CHARACTERS!

BUT THE VILLAGERS WERE ONLY A PASSING CURIOSITY. JOE AND HIS BOYS BEGAN THE REAL WORK! THE PROPER PEOPLE WERE *BRIBED*. A *SARCOPHAGUS* WITH HIDDEN *AIR BAFFLES*, WAS CONSTRUCTED...

WITH EVERYTHING IN READINESS, JOE TOOK A *DRUG* THAT MIMICKED DEATH! THE CORONER, WITH A CRISP FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL IN HIS POCKET, CERTIFIED DEATH BY HEART SEIZURE..

GET A LOAD PETE, BOSS! ARGUING WITH THEM *DUMB HICKS!*

I DO NO LIE, SEÑOR, IT IS TRUE! *FOUR* OF OUR CITIZENS HAVE *DIED* VERY STRANGELY IN THE LAST WEEKS!

AW, I BET IT'S JUST SOMEBODY MAKIN' A FEW HITS, 'AT'S ALL!

SEE YOU MAKE THOSE AIR HOLES RIGHT, FELLA! DON'T WANT THE OXYGEN GETTING STALE, DO WE!

WE'LL HAVE THE *FUNERAL TOMORROW!* JOE NEVER LIKED TO WASTE TIME!

THE PLAN HAD BEEN FLAWLESS, TOO FLAWLESS...
LOUSY PUNKS SOLD ME OUT! EVERYBODY THINKS I'M DEAD! I'LL DIE OF THIRST, STARVE!
JOE SCREAMED FOR HELP UNTIL HIS VOICE SPLINTERED INTO SHAKING WHISPERS...
CAN'T HEAR ME THROUGH ALL THIS STONE! CAN'T HEAR ME... (SOB)
ANOTHER ETERNITY PASSED! LIKE TRAPPED RATS, JOE'S FINGERS CLAWED AT THE INTERIOR OF THE SARCOPHAGUS UNTIL THEY WERE BLOODY AND RAGGED WITH TORN FLESH...
I'LL GET OUT YET (SOB)... MAKE THOSE PUNKS PAY (CHOKE)...
ANOTHER MIDNIGHT! JOE'S BROKEN FINGERS SOMEHOW FOUND A CRACK IN THE STONE LID, INCHED OUT LIKE SLINKING WORMS!
GOD! THANK GOD! IT'S GIVING ... GIVING ... AT LAST!
THE LID SLID OFF, CRASHED TO THE FLOOR AND SHATTERED!
LIGHT! I CAN SEE!
JOE SHUFFLED TO THE VAULT GATE, THREW HIS WEIGHT AGAINST THE RUSTING IRON...
IT'S GIVING! I'LL BE FREE IN A MOMENT...
THE GATE SCREAMED ON OLD HINGES! JOE FELL STAGGERING INTO A NIGHT THAT WAS BRIGHT BENEATH A SKULL-LIKE MOON...
AIR! FRESH AIR! I'M FREE!
THEN JOE'S BLOOD RAN COLD AS HE REMEMBERED THE TALES OF THE VAMPIRES...
THAT SHADOW! LIKE...

WITH A SOUND THAT WAS A FUSING OF SCREAM AND SOB, JOE TURNED TO MEET THE VAMPIRE, BUT...
AN ANGEL! HA! HA! JUST THE SHADOW OF A MARBLE ANGEL!
THE SARCOPHAGUS HAD PROTECTED HIM FROM THE COLD. BUT NOW... HE HAD TO GET TO SHELTER! HE LURCHED FORWARD...
LOUSY COLD! I'LL FREEZE IF...
THEN, JUST AHEAD, JOE SAW THE GLOW OF LANTERNS, TORCHES, MOVING SHADOWS...
THE HICKS! THEY CAN HELP ME... GET OUTTA THIS COLD!
JOE TRIED TO CRY OUT, BUT ONLY ACHIEVED AN UNNATURAL CROAK...
ARRRRAK!
BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER! THE VILLAGERS HAD ALREADY SEEN HIM...
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THOSE HAYSEEDS!? THEY'RE ACTING CRAZY LIKE...
DID TOO MUCH YELLING... RUINED MY VOICE...
THEN JOE HEARD THEIR MUTTERING VOICES, NOW RISING TO HATE-FILLED YELLS...
VAMPIRE!
KILL IT!
THE STAKE!
NAAARRRR! AAAUUU!
NO! THEY'RE CRAZY!
VAMPIRE!
AARRRYYUUUUU
WHEN JOE FINALLY MANAGED TO SCREAM, IT WAS TOO LATE!
TSK, TSK, WHAT A TIME FOR POOR JOE TO COME DOWN WITH LARYNGITIS! AND THOSE STUPID VILLAGERS, THEY REALLY MADE A MIS STAKE! WELL, NOBODY'S PERFECT! THEY CAN ALWAYS FOLLOW AN OLD BIT OF ADVICE! ALWAYS BURY YOUR TROUBLES! HE, HE, AND HOPE SOMEBODY ELSE .. DIGS THEM UP!
THE END

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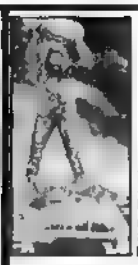

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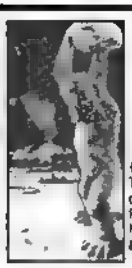

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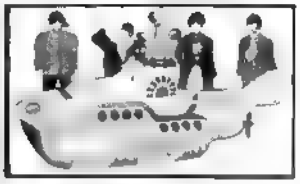

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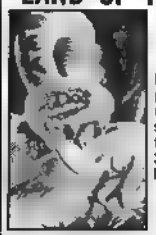

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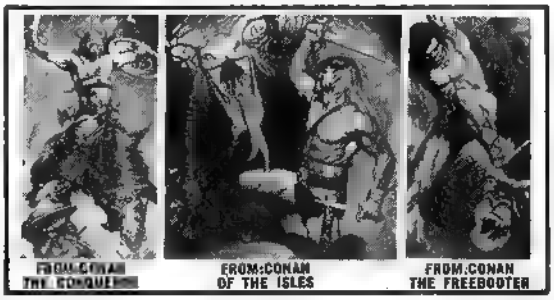

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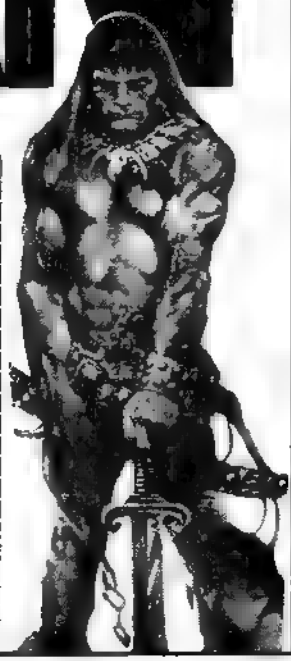


ART BY TONY WILLIAMSON/STORY BY R. MICHAEL ROSEN

EVERYTHING CHECKS OUT O.K., CAPTAIN! SET FOR TAKEOFF!
THANKS, DAN! SOON AS THE TOWER GIVES US PERMISSION, WE'LL TAKE HER UP!
NICE CLEAN TAKEOFF!
HERE WE GO! WHEW! IT'S SCARY!
MIAMI BEACH, HERE WE COME!
CLEAR WEATHER ALL THE WAY TO MIAMI, CAPTAIN! SHOULD BE SMOOTH SAILING... HOW COME YOU LOOK SO WORRIED?
I'M NOT SURE...BUT SOMETHING'S WRONG! THE SHIP TOOK OFF O.K., BUT IT FELT A LITTLE HEAVY...MUCH HEAVIER THAN THE CARGO MANIFEST INDICATED IT WOULD BE!
I CAN CHECK OUT THE CARGO HOLD IF YOU LIKE, CAPTAIN!
WHY DON'T YOU, DAN... DON'T FORGET THE CARGO MANIFEST! PROBABLY ALL MY IMAGINATION, BUT REPORT ANY THING UNUSUAL!
HERE COMES THE PILOT!
CO-PILOT, I BELIEVE...
ANYTHING WRONG? I'M NERVOUS ABOUT FLYING! MY FIRST TIME, YOU KNOW.
NOTHING AT ALL! JUST ROUTINE!
HMMM...THAT'S FUNNY! NOT LOCKED!! I'M SURE I CHECKED IT BEFORE TAKEOFF!
WHAT THE BLAZES?! THOSE BOXES THEY'RE CERTAINLY NOT ON THE MANIFEST!
CAPTAIN, THERE ARE A WHOLE BUNCH OF BOXES IN THE HOLD NOT ON THE MANIFEST! AND...THEY...THEY LOOK LIKE COFFINS! SHALL WE TURN AROUND!
NO, I DON'T THINK WE'RE IN ANY DANGER! BUT JUST TO BE SAFE, HAVE THEM CONFISCATED IN MIAMI!

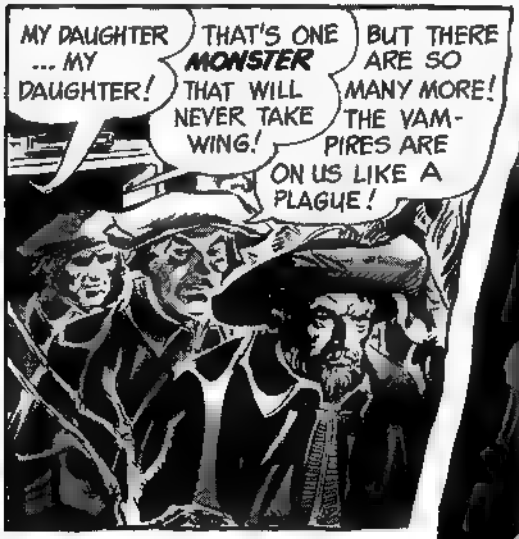
AH! WE ARE OVER THE HORIZON! THE FULL MOON NOW IS VISIBLE!
I MUST GET INTO THE PILOT CABIN! THERE MUST BE NO MISTAKES!
OH, SIR! YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE! ONLY THE CREW...
OOOOOOF!!
OUT OF MY WAY! NONE MUST INTERFERE!
CREW ONLY
LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE UP THERE! I'D BETTER...
DO NOT INTERFERE!!
WHAT... WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THIS?
EASY, DAN! YOU KNOW THAT OFFICIAL POLICY IS THE SAFETY OF THE PASSENGERS! LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO HAVANA!
YOU WILL CHANGE COURSE AND FOLLOW THE CHART I GIVE YOU!
THE BLAZES WE WILL!
PARDON ME...I HAVE NOT INTRODUCED MYSELF, I AM VIKTOR GRUBAR...AND I MERELY MEANT THAT IT IS BEST TO AVOID VIOLENCE AT ANY COST!
SAY, THIS COURSE DOESN'T TAKE US TO CUBA!!
SHUT UP AND DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!
ALL RIGHT... BUT LORD ONLY KNOWS WHERE THIS WILL TAKE US!
SAY; WE'RE CHANGING COURSE, AREN'T WE?
WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE...THIS IS THE CAPTAIN!... WE HAVE BEEN HIJACKED AND COMPELLED TO CHANGE OUR COURSE! BUT WE HAVE AMPLE FUEL TO REACH OUR DESTINATION!
DESTINATION? CUBA! OF COURSE...WHERE ELSE?
BE CALM! YOU WILL KNOW IN GOOD TIME!
YOU'RE IN ON THIS, GRUBAR....
I'M NOT TAKING A MILLION DOLLAR PLANE AND 100 PASSENGERS TO SOME MYSTERY AIRPORT!
DAN! DON'T!!
AAAAAAAAAA
WHERE DID THESE MEN COME FROM?
FROM THE CARGO HOLD, NO DOUBT! YOU WOULD BE WISE TO OBEY THEM!
THEY'RE FRIGHTENING!
EVERYBODY SIT DOWN! STAY IN YOUR SEATS OR SOMETHING UNPLEASANT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU!
DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED, LITTLE NAN! NOTHING WILL HAPPEN TO YOU! I HAVE SOME SPECIAL...ER... PLANS FOR YOU!
YOU KILLED HIM! OH, MY GOD...THE BLOOD! YOU...YOU'RE NOT HUMAN! YOU'RE A... A...
DON'T SAY IT! WE DON'T LIKE THAT WORD! TURN AROUND AND STAY ON COURSE WE'LL LAND SOON!
WELL, WE'RE NOT GOING TO CUBA! WE'VE BEEN FLYING TOO LONG!
I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT! HALF THESE PEOPLE LOOK LIKE OUR FRIEND GRUBAR HERE, AND THE OTHER HALF LOOK LIKE THAT FELLOW WHO WENT INTO THE COCKPIT! IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!

AND WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO GET A CUP OF COFFEE... IT'LL CALM MY NERVES!
AND TO TAKE A LOOK INTO THAT CARGO HOLD! SOMEBODY'S GOT TO FIGURE THIS THING OUT AND START DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
AH, HERE WE ARE! NOW LET'S SEE WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST!
WHAT THE BLAZES ARE THEY DOING HERE? UNLESS... WHY, IT'S TOO FANTASTIC!! A GROWN MAN DOESN'T BELIEVE IN THINGS LIKE THAT! UH-OH! SOMEONE ELSE WAS CURIOUS TOO!
OH, NO! IT CAN'T BE!!
GGGRRRRR
AAAAAA
SIT STILL YOU LITTLE FOOL! WE'RE LANDING ANY MINUTE!
THAT SOUNDED LIKE FRANK! I'VE GOT TO GO!
THE AIRPORT IS DIRECTLY BELOW! BEGIN YOUR DESCENT!
ALL RIGHT!
I DON'T SUPPOSE I CAN ASK WHERE WE ARE... SOMEWHERE IN SOUTH AMERICA, I CALCULATE!
THAT'S RIGHT... YOU CAN'T ASK! HEH-HEH!
FRANK! ARE YOU THERE? FRANK? OH, MY GOD, NO!

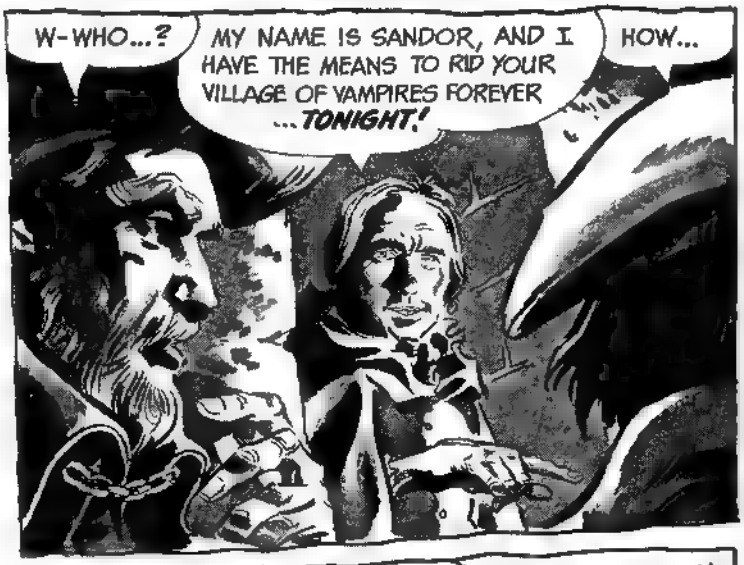
EEEEEK!
NO! NO! GET BACK! YOU KNOW SHE'S MINE!
GROWL!
VIKTOR!
IT SEEMS YOU HAVE DISCOVERED OUR SECRET! WE ARE WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL...POLITICAL REFUGEES! FORCED FROM OUR ANCESTRAL HOME IN THE BALKANS! WE RELOCATED IN ANOTHER REMOTE REGION... SOUTH AMERICA!
BUT ONE THING WAS LACKING! THE LOCAL PEASANTS AND GENTRY OF THE BALKANS!
WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT...BLOOD! THE PEOPLE ON THIS PLANE WILL BE BRED IN CAPTIVITY UNTIL THERE ARE ENOUGH HUMANS TO SUPPLY ALL OF US!
ALL BUT YOU, THAT IS! YOU WILL BE MY SPECIAL, LITTLE REWARD.....
EEEEEEEEEE
WELCOME TO NEW TRANSYLVANIA
ALL RIGHT; NO COMPLANEING JUST 'CAUSE ALL THAT AERIAL INSANITY DIDN'T TAKE PLACE ON YOUR LAST FLIGHT! ANYWAY THE VICTIMS, ER...I MEAN PASSENGERS, CERTAINLY GOT A TRAP, ER TRIP, THEY WEREN'T EXPECTING! WHOOOPEEE!
THE END

ART BY EUGENE COLAN/SCRIPT BY LARRY IVIE


MY DAUGHTER ... MY DAUGHTER!
THAT'S ONE MONSTER THAT WILL NEVER TAKE WING!
BUT THERE ARE SO MANY MORE! THE VAMPIRES ARE ON US LIKE A PLAGUE!

MULTIPLYING FASTER THAN WE CAN KILL THEM!
THE VILLAGE WILL SOON BE DESTROYED! WHAT CAN WE DO?
WE CAN HURRY HOME BEFORE THE SUN SETS ON US!

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING... SOMEONE...
IT'S NO USE... WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING!
THEN YOU ARE READY FOR MY HELP!


W-WHO...?
MY NAME IS SANDOR, AND I HAVE THE MEANS TO RID YOUR VILLAGE OF VAMPIRES FOREVER ...TONIGHT!
HOW...

WITH THIS!
ARE YOU MAD? DRIVE OFF VAMPIRES WITH A... FLUTE?!
WHY NOT? NOTHING ELSE HAS WORKED... LET THE POOR FOOL TRY!

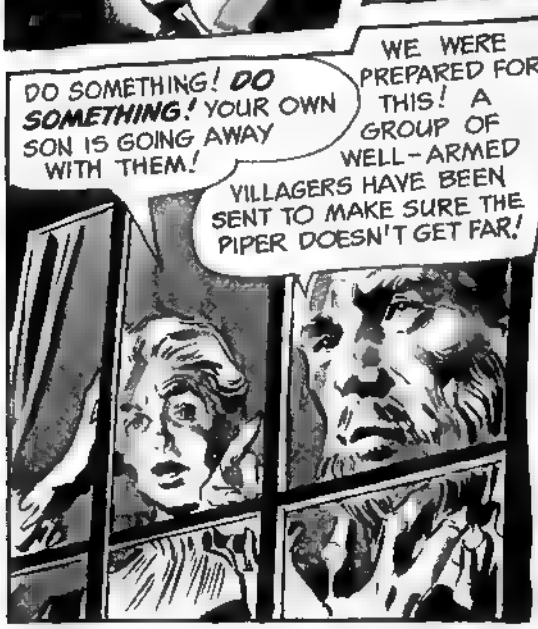
I WARN YOU, BURGERMEISTER... MY PRICE IS HIGH! ONE THOUSAND GOLD MARKS!
ANYTHING YOU SAY, PIPER... BUT DON'T DEPEND ON THE VAMPIRES LEAVING YOU ALIVE TO COLLECT!

UNMINDFUL OF NIGHT'S TERRIBLE DANGERS, THE GAUNT MAN SEATED HIMSELF AND BEGAN TO PLAY... SENDING A WEIRD, HAUNTING WAIL INTO THE FORBODING DARKNESS...
T-THAT SOUND... SO FRIGHTENING IT COULD ALMOST WORK! WHAT WILL YOU DO? HOW CAN YOU PAY HIM? THERE'S NOTHING IN THE VILLAGE TREASURY!
IT WON'T WORK! HOW CAN IT?!
SANDOR'S MUSIC BECAME WILDER AND MORE FRENZIED... AND SUDDENLY WAS JOINED BY HORRIBLE SCREAMS ECHOING OUT OF THE NIGHT... REBOUNDING AND BLENDING INTO THE PIPING!
AND IN THE MORNING, SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE AREA, WAS AMPLE PROOF OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANDOR'S PLAYING!
I KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING, BURGERMEISTER ...YOU HAVE ONE HOUR TO MAKE GOOD YOUR PROMISE TO PAY! YOU WON'T LIKE WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FAIL!
WHY DID WE GET INVOLVED WITH HIM? IT'S JUST LIKE THE LEGEND... THE LEGEND OF THE PIED PIPER!

WHEN THE PIPER WASN'T PAID FOR RIDDING A VILLAGE OF RATS, HE PLAYED ANOTHER TUNE AND LURED ALL THE CHILDREN AWAY... FOREVER! WHAT IF...
WE HAVE AN HOUR! TIME ENOUGH TO PREPARE IF OUR PIPER DOES THE SAME THING!

THE HOUR PASSED QUICKLY AND SANDOR REAPPEARED EXACTLY ON TIME...
YOU CAN'T MAKE US PAY FOR A COINCIDENCE! YOUR PLAYING HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE VAMPIRES' DESTRUCTION!
VERY WELL...NOW I'LL PIPE A DIFFERENT TUNE!

HE'S TAKING THE CHILDREN AWAY!


DO SOMETHING! DO SOMETHING! YOUR OWN SON IS GOING AWAY WITH THEM!
WE WERE PREPARED FOR THIS! A GROUP OF WELL-ARMED VILLAGERS HAVE BEEN SENT TO MAKE SURE THE PIPER DOESN'T GET FAR!

HE'S TAKEN THEM OFF THE ROAD...
LEADING THEM INTO THE FIELD UP ON THE HILL!

IN THE LEGEND, THE PIPER VANISHED INTO A MOUNTAIN WITH ALL THE CHILDREN...
THEN WE'D BEST END HIS PLAYING BEFORE THE SAME IS DONE WITH THE HILL...

NOW!

THUNK
THUNK

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? IT'S NO GOOD TO BE RID OF THE VAMPIRES AT THE COST OF OUR CHILDREN!
PATIENCE, LADIES! LISTEN ... IN THE DISTANCE! IT SOUNDS LIKE...

THE CHILDREN!
THEY'RE ALL SAFE! SCRATCHED UP FROM BRAMBLES AND BUSHES, BUT SAFE!

BY NIGHTFALL THE VILLAGE WAS FULL OF REJOICING... AND THERE WAS MUCH FOR WHICH TO BE HAPPY...
SAFE! THE CHILDREN ARE BACK AND ONE CAN STROLL IN THE MOONLIGHT WITH NO FEAR OF VAMPIRES...SAFE!
SUDDENLY THE SAFE NIGHT WAS RENT WITH HORRIBLE SOUNDS FROM EVERY PART OF THE VILLAGE!
EEEEEEEEEEE
AAAARGHH
GOOD LORD! WHAT...
THE CHILDREN! THE CHILDREN! THAT FIELD THE PIPER LEAD THEM INTO...
...WAS FULL... OF... WOLFBANE..
WOLFBANE! B-BUT THAT'S THE PLANT WHOSE SCRATCH TURNS A VICTIM INTO A--
FATHER... OH, FATHER.
INSTINCTIVELY, THE BURGERMEISTER TURNED AT THE SOUND OF THE FAMILIAR VOICE...
WEREWOLF!
HOPE ALL YOU MUSIC-LOVERS GOT A HOWL OUT OF THAT ENDING... PERSONALLY, I THINK IT WAS QUITE NICE OF SANDOR TO ARRANGE A WAY OF RIPPING UP THE DEBT... SPEAKING OF DEBTS, ANYONE WANNA BUY A SECOND-HAND FLUTE?

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PROLOGUE:

NO ONE HAD KNOWN OF MELINDA'S SICKNESS UNTIL AFTER THAT NIGHT IN NOVEMBER WHEN SHE CAME TO LIVE WITH HER UNCLE AND AUNT SIMMS. SOME SAID THE SHOCK OF SEEING HER PARENTS CREMATED ALIVE HAD INFECTED HER MIND WITH A MADNESS!
NEITHER COULD HER GRANDMOTHER, GABRIEL BEVINGER SHED ANY FACT UPON WHERE FICTION BEGAN - FOR UPON HER OWN ESCAPE FROM THE FLAMING INFERNO THAT HAD BURIED HER SON, HOWARD, SHE BECAME DUMB AND BLIND! IF NOT FOR THIS, PERHAPS AN ANSWER COULD HAVE RELEASED MELINDAS SECRET TORTURES.
HOWARD BEVINGER HAD SPOKEN OFTEN OF HIS FEARS FOR MELINDA TO HIS SISTER EMILY. IT WAS HER PROMISE TO LOOK AFTER THE GIRL THAT BROUGHT MELINDA TO MIST MANSION UPON HER FATHER'S DEATH. IT WAS THEN TO THAT EMILY FIRST LEARNED OF MELINDA'S AFFLICTION. THE DEVIL'S DISEASE HAD POSSESSED HER!
YET EVEN THE FINEST DOCTORS COULD NOT EXPLAIN HER REACTIONS AS TIME WENT ON. TRUE THE SYMPTOMS WERE CLEARLY AS DIAGNOSED, BUT AS MELINDA GREW OLDER THE SEIZURES WERE REPLACED WITH INTERVALS OF TRANCE HYSTERIA. IT SEEMED, DURING THESE BREAKS IN HER SANITY THAT HER SOUL HAD COMPLETELY LEFT HER!
WHEN EMILY FOUND HER THAT FIRST TIME, SHE'D PASSED HER LANTERN BACK AND FORTH ACROSS MELINDAS EYES - ALL THEY REFLECTED THEN WERE EMPTY SENSES - THE GIRL LOOKED BOTH DEATHLESS AND LIFELESS. IN A SINGLE MOMENT, EMILY SIMMS HAD BEEN FRIGHTENED THEN... SHE WAS FRIGHTENED NOW!
SHE KNEW THAT ONE DAY MELINDA WOULD HAVE TO DESTROY THIS MADNESS WITHIN HER... OR BE DESTROYED HERSELF! THE MOMENT TO DECIDE WAS CLOSER THAN ANYONE IMAGINED — EVEN MELINDA!
MELINDA, CHILD... CAN YOU HEAR ME, MELINDA?

ART BY TOM SUTTON/STORY BY BILL PARENTE

IT WASN'T BECAUSE MELINDA DOUBTED ELLIOT'S LOVE THAT SHE'D NEVER EXPLAINED HER SICKNESS TO HIM— AUNT EMILY HAD MADE HER PROMISE NEVER TO TELL **ANYONE!** NOT **EVER!**

LADIES... GENTLEMEN... MY WIFE AND I WOULD LIKE YOU TO JOIN US IN WISHING OUR NIECE, MELINDA A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

GO ON AND MAKE A WISH, MISS MELINDA!

BLOW OUT THE CANDLES, MELINDA...

HER FACE FELT SUDDENLY WARM AND BALANCE BEGAN TO BUCKLE IN HER MIND! IT WAS HAPPENING AGAIN... SO SOON THIS TIME! FACES WATCHING HER BEGAN TO MELT, AND AIR CLOGGED IN GASPS IN HER THROAT.

AUNT EMILY... =GASP!= I FEEL... I...

DAVIS... ELLIOT! THE SALTS... BRING THE SALTS QUICKLY!

PLEASE... EVERYONE... STAND BACK, GIVE HER ROOM!

SHE WANTED TO BREAK THROUGH HER COMA AND SCREAM OUT TO ELLIOT! HER BODY SEEMED FLOATING TOWARD THE ROOM SHE FELL INTO...

BE CAREFUL MAH BOY... WATCH YOU DON'T BUMP YOR HEAD IN THE DARK HEAH!

... AND FROM BEYOND THE DROWNED FEELINGS OF HER CONSCIOUSNESS, A WANTING FOR SOMEONE TO RID HER OF THIS TORMENT ESCAPED IN A MOAN. WAS THERE NO ONE TO TELL OF HER MADNESS...?

NO ONE?

HEAR ME, ELLIOT TYSON... THAT GIRL IN THERE WILL DIE BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS OVER! AND YOU MUST DESTROY HER!

HAVE YOU SPENT ALL THOSE YEARS IN SILENCE JUST TO TELL ME WITH YOUR FIRST WORDS TO MURDER THE GIRL I LOVE? WHY DID YOU MAKE YOURSELF DUMB, OLD WOMAN?
I PROMISED MYSELF NEVER TO SPEAK, FOR IF I DID I KNEW I MUST TELL OF MELINDA'S SICKNESS, NOW IT'S TOO LATE TO HALT THE CURSE...
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK YOU'RE THE ONE WHO IS CURSED...OR WHATEVER! I'M NOT A FOOL, GRANDMOTHER GABRIEL!
NO... I'M THE FOOL, ELLIOT TYSON! AND I HAVE FORCED IT TO BE, I SHOULD HAVE ENDED THIS LONG AGO... WHEN IT ALL BEGAN.
"MY HUSBAND HAD BEEN DEAD THREE YEARS, AND IN THOSE DAYS MY SON HOWARD WAS A WILD YOUTH... FULL OF DARING AND ALWAYS IN TROUBLE. I'D HOPED THAT AN EDUCATION IN EUROPE WOULD FULFILL A PROMISE I'D MADE HIS FATHER, HE WANTED A GENTLEMAN TO CARRY ON THE BEVINGER NAME."
"WITHIN A MONTH, I RECIEVED WORD FROM HOWARD'S PROFESSOR THAT HE'D LEFT THE UNIVERSITY, NO ONE KNEW WHERE HE HAD GONE, NOR DID ANYONE HEAR OF HIM FOR ALMOST FOUR YEARS, THEN, WHEN HOPE WAS ALMOST SPENT, A LETTER SUDDENLY ARRIVED. IN IT, HOWARD PROMISED TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING WHEN HE RETURNED. I WAS OVERJOYED!"
HOWARD COLLEGE
"I FIRST SAW HIS WIFE, TANYA AND LITTLE MELINDA THREE MONTHS FROM THE DAY HOWARD'S LETTER ARRIVED. I RECALL A FEELING OF GREAT PERPLEXION OVERCAME ME! THE CHILD WAS SO BEAUTIFUL... THE MOTHER SO UNREAL!

"HOWARD SAID NOTHING DURING THOSE NEXT FEW DAYS, I RARELY SAW HIM OR TANYA EXCEPT AT SUPPER. SHE APOLOGIZED, BLAMING HER ILLNESS ON THE HEAT- HOWARD HAD WARNED ME HER HEALTH WAS QUITE POOR, I DID NOT PURSUE THE MATTER... "
"IT WAS A PARTICULARLY STIFLING AFTERNOON, AS I PASSED TANYA'S ROOM I THOUGHT I HEARD FROM WITHIN TORTURED SOBBING... "
MY GOD!
"MY FIRST IMPULSE WAS TO SCREAM FOR HOWARD- ONLY WHEN I REMEMBERED THAT HE'D TAKEN MELINDA TO VISIT EMILY DID I APPROACH THE ASHEN BODY OF HIS WIFE!"
HER SKIN... SO WHITE! HER EYES DO NOT FLUTTER! HOW CAN SHE BREATH?
"THE ROOM WAS A PRISON OF SUFFOCATION, AND I FELT FAINT EVEN AS I REACHED FOR THE SASH OF THE DRAPE TO DRAW IT OPEN"
GASP! I MUST LET SOME AIR INTO THIS PLACE! I... I CAN'T BREATHE!
MOTHER... STOP! IF YOU OPEN THOSE CURTAINS, YOU WILL MURDER MY WIFE!
SHE WOULD BE DESTROYED INSTANTLY IN THE SUNLIGHT!
AS ALL OF HER KIND WOULD, YOU SEE, MOTHER, TANYA IS A... VAMPIRE!
AND I HAVE BECOME EVEN SOMETHING MORE HIDEOUS THAN THAT!
HOWARD... YOU COWARD! YOU FILIBUSTERING RING-TAILED RACCOON.!! AFTER ALL THAT HARANGUING TWANGING, YOU'RE GONNA KEEP US HANGING 'TILL NEXT MONTH'S CLANGING? OKAY, REB!... BUT DON'T THINK YOU CAN FINK OUT 'TILL WE LINK OUT THE REST OF YOUR TALL TALE, TALL TAIL... SHORT SNOUT... YOU MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE ANYTHING, HUH HOWARD? YOU GOT US THIS TIME, VARMIT... ME AND MY CUZZINS WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU TO UNHIDE YOUR HIDE IN NEXT ISSUE'S MENUE OF MORBID MANIA! YEEEAHOOOO!!

PROLOG...

HEY, JACK - LET'S PLAY WE'RE EXPLORERS IN THE CAVE!

NO! DON'T YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MONSTER THAT LIVES THERE? MY MOMMY AND DADDY TOLD ME NEVER TO GO IN THERE!

AW, YOU'RE A FRAIDY CAT! I'M NOT SCARED! IF THERE'S A MONSTER IN THERE, I'M GOING IN AND KILL IT!

I'M NOT SCARED! BUT I JUST DON'T WANT TO... PLEASE TIMMY, DON'T GO! PLEASE

AW, C'MON IN! IT'S COOL IN HERE! HMM... THERE'S A FUNNY SMELL... I THINK IT COMES FROM THESE STRANGE LOOKING MUSHROOMS!

I DON'T SMELL NOTHING! ... TIMMY? ... TIMMY! WHERE ARE YOU? DON'T PLAY HIDE AND SEEK IN HERE!

TIMMY... PLEASE... NO! NO! HELP! EEEEAAARGH!

MOMMY! DADDY! OH, :SOB: THE MONSTER GOT JACK!

LATER...

WILL HE BE ALRIGHT, DOCTOR?

I'M SURE THAT WITH TREATMENT HE'LL RECOVER! BUT HIS LOSS OF MEMORY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED MAY BE PERMANENT... THE MIND HAS A WAY OF BLOTTING OUT THINGS WHICH ARE ESPECIALLY UNPLEASANT! WE MAY NEVER KNOW WHAT KILLED AND MUTILATED HIS YOUNG FRIEND!

SO TIMMY IS IN-CAVE-ABLE OF REMEMBERING WHAT HAPPENED... BUT HOLD ON! HORROR HOUNDS, THAT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING! 25 YEARS PASS, TIM GETS MARRIED AND RETURNS HOME WITH HIS BRIDE ONLY FOR ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WITH...

THE THING IN THE CAVE

 ART BY MIKE ROYER/STORY BY R. MICHAEL ROSEN

A FEW HOURS LATER...

JUST WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?... I DON'T THINK YOU'VE EVER EXPLAINED IT TO ME!

WELL, I'LL MAKE IT AS SIMPLE AS I CAN! WE ALL KNOW THAT CERTAIN MUSHROOMS HAVE STRANGE EFFECTS ON HUMAN BEINGS! THE SO-CALLED "MAGIC MUSHROOMS" FOR INSTANCE, OR THE PSYCHEDELIC TOADSTOOLS THAT THE AMERICAN INDIANS USED IN THEIR RELIGIOUS RITES!

MOST OF THESE EFFECTS ARE JUST PSYCHOLOGICAL, BUT SOME CAN BE PHYSICAL... MANY ARE DEADLY POISON!

I'M WORKING ON A PAPER ABOUT THE RARER *PHYSICAL* EFFECTS OF CERTAIN MUSHROOMS...

AND ONE IN PARTICULAR: THE RARE *FUNGUS ARRICARTHUS!*

OUR HYBRID SPECIMENS OF ARRICARTHUS CAUSE WEIRD AND HORRIBLE PHYSICAL CHANGES IN LABORATORY ANIMALS!

BUT THE HYBRIDS ARE IMPURE, AND THE NATURAL ONES ARE THOUGHT TO BE EXTINCT!

IF I COULD ONLY FIND SOME...

SOUNDS WEIRD! WHAT EVER MADE YOU BECOME A FUNGOLOGIST IN THE FIRST PLACE?

I DON'T KNOW, HON... SOMETHING I CAN'T QUITE REMEMBER, FROM LONG AGO, TELLS ME THAT MUSHROOMS ARE IMPORTANT TO ME! SOMETHING HAPPENED IN MY CHILDHOOD! BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER...

CAN'T YOUR PARENTS TELL YOU WHAT IT IS?

I THINK THEY KNOW, BUT THEY WON'T TELL ME WHAT IT IS!

ANYWAY, IT'S NOT IMPORTANT NOW! I'VE DONE ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY!

LET'S TAKE A WALK!

IS IT SAFE TO LEAVE YOUR RESEARCH SPECIMENS AROUND? WON'T THAT MOTH DAMAGE THEM?

MOTH? WHAT MOTH?

THAT MOTH THERE ... ON TOP OF THE MUSHROOM!

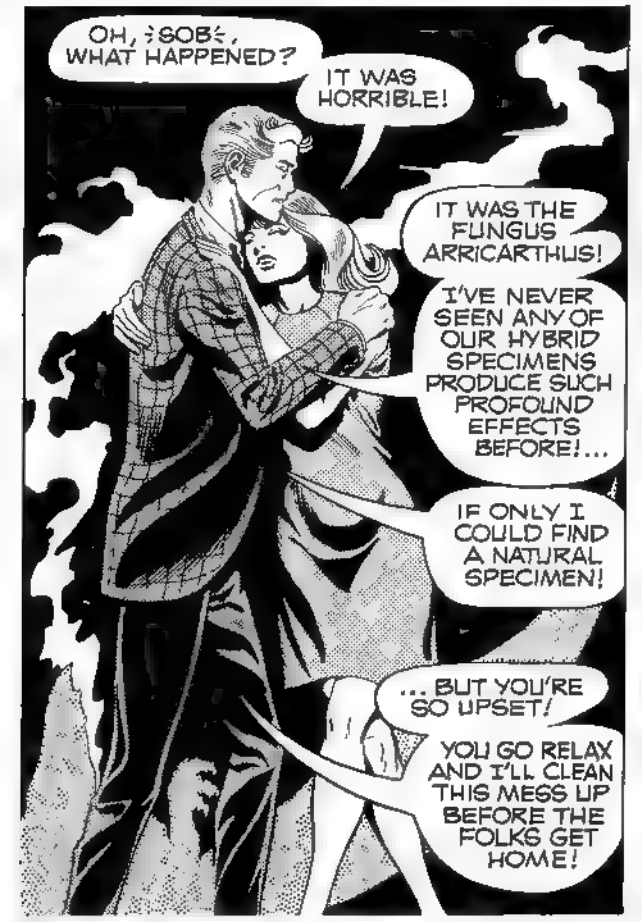
GREAT HEAVENS! IT'S ON THE FUNGUS ARRICARTHUS! I SHOULD CHASE IT AWAY... BUT I'M CURIOUS TO SEE IF ANYTHING HAPPENS!

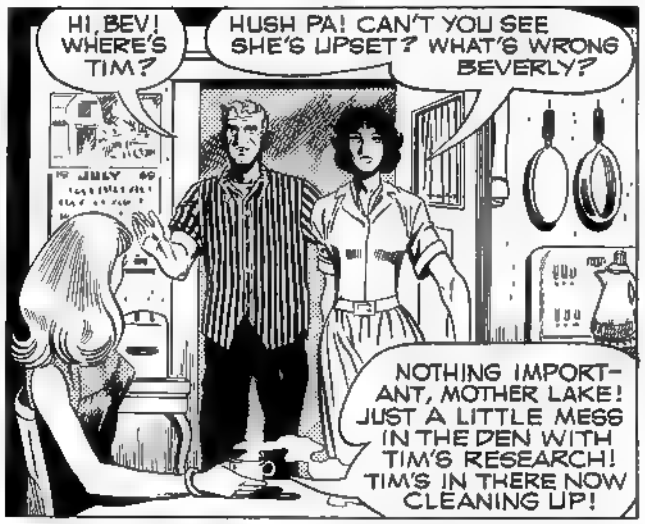
IT... IT... *IT'S CHANGING!*

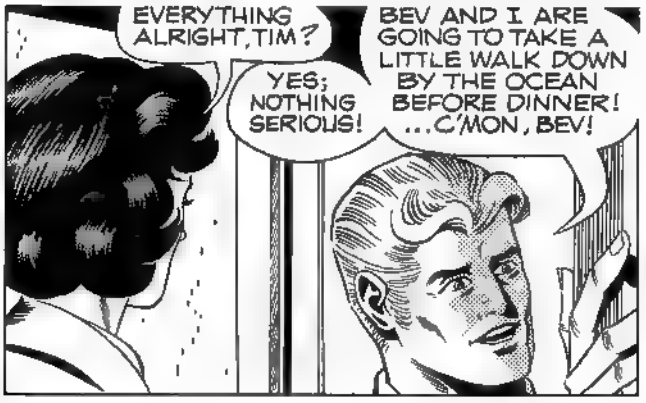
EEEEEEAAAAH!
HANG ON! I'LL KILL IT SOMEHOW!

HOPE DAD KEEPS THIS DISPLAY LOADED!
GOD HELP US IF NOT!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEK!
BLAM!


OH, ;SOB:, WHAT HAPPENED?
IT WAS HORRIBLE!
IT WAS THE FUNGUS ARRICARTHUS!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY OF OUR HYBRID SPECIMENS PRODUCE SUCH PROFOUND EFFECTS BEFORE!...
IF ONLY I COULD FIND A NATURAL SPECIMEN!
... BUT YOU'RE SO UPSET!
YOU GO RELAX AND I'LL CLEAN THIS MESS UP BEFORE THE FOLKS GET HOME!


HI, BEV! WHERE'S TIM?
HUSH PA! CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S UPSET? WHAT'S WRONG BEVERLY?
NOTHING IMPORTANT, MOTHER LAKE! JUST A LITTLE MESS IN THE DEN WITH TIM'S RESEARCH! TIM'S IN THERE NOW CLEANING UP!


EVERYTHING ALRIGHT, TIM?
YES; NOTHING SERIOUS!
BEV AND I ARE GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE WALK DOWN BY THE OCEAN BEFORE DINNER! ...C'MON, BEV!

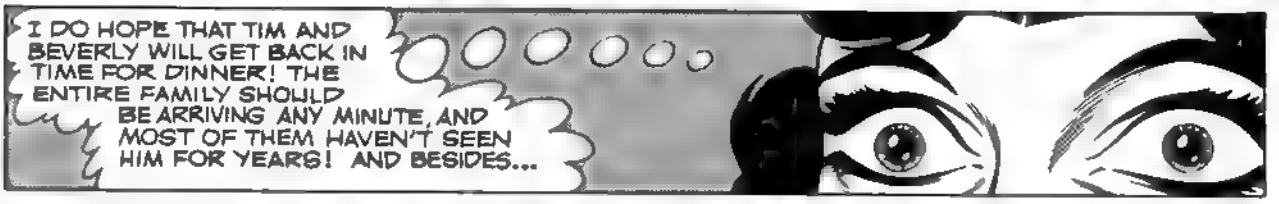
ALRIGHT, BUT DON'T BE LATE! ...I WANTED THIS TO BE A SURPRISE-
TO CELEBRATE YOUR HOMECOMING, I'VE INVITED THE WHOLE FAMILY OVER FOR DINNER!
SOMETHING WRONG, DARLING?
I HAVEN'T BEEN HERE SINCE I WAS A LITTLE BOY! IT TRIGGERS SOMETHING BURIED IN MY MEMORY...
I CAN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON IT, BUT IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE THING I CAN'T REMEMBER, I THINK!
THAT'S IT! THAT CAVE! IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT CAVE!
I MUST KNOW... LET'S GO IN AND MAYBE I CAN REMEMBER!
COME ON... LET'S GO!
ARE YOU SURE WE SHOULD? PERHAPS IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T KNOW!
BESIDES, WE'VE HAD ENOUGH EXCITEMENT FOR ONE DAY!
COME IN... THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!
ALL... ALRIGHT!
WHEW! SO DARK IN HERE!
YES, BUT SOMEHOW VERY FAMILIAR... WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, I HAD A FRIEND NAMED... JACK! HE DIDN'T WANT TO COME IN HERE, BUT I TEASED HIM TILL HE DID! AND THEN... BUT I DON'T QUITE REMEMBER THE REST!
TAKE IT EASY, DARLING! IT WILL ALL COME BACK!
BEVERLY- LOOK!
WHAT IS IT?
IT CAN'T BE... BUT IT IS! FUNGUS ARRICARTHUS!
A NATURAL SPECIMEN! WHAT A FIND!
...I...I... REMEMBER THE REST OF IT NOW!

... JACK CAME IN... I FOUND THE MUSHROOMS... THERE WAS A FUNNY ODOR... AND THEN... OH, MY GOD, NO! NOW I REMEMBER!
THE MONSTER!
RUN, BEVERLY, RUN! BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
RUN? WHY? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT'S THIS ABOUT MONSTERS?

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MI... OH LORD, NO! NO! NO!

THE MUSHROOMS ...GASP... CHANGED HIM...
JUST LIKE THE MOTH...
-CHOKE-
ARRGGH!
SOMEBODY HELP ME PLEASE! OH, LORD!

EEEEEEEEEEAAARRRGH!


I DO HOPE THAT TIM AND BEVERLY WILL GET BACK IN TIME FOR DINNER! THE ENTIRE FAMILY SHOULD BE ARRIVING ANY MINUTE, AND MOST OF THEM HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR YEARS! AND BESIDES...

...I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO MISS THIS DINNER I'M WORKING SO HARD ON...
...WITH THESE LOVELY MUSHROOMS I FOUND GROWING DOWN BY THE BEACH!
THERE'S A FUNGUS AMONG US! AND IT'S AT THE DINNER PARTY!
TIM WILL ARRIVE ANY MINUTE! OF CORPSE, HE WON'T REMEMBER WHERE BEV IS... MAYBE HE'LL THINK HE LEFT HER IN THE MUSH-ROOM! IF YOU'LL PULL UP A NICE, CONFORTABLE TOAD-STOOL, I'LL TAKE YOU INTO MY NEXT ODOROUS OPUS!

EERIE FANFARE

Here's a lively story from Paul E. King, Jr. He says it all happened a long time ago. But he's looking for recruits to make it happen again. Any takers?

I GAVE HIM LIFE!

On a black night in the year 1807, an ederlt man walks slowly down a deserted country road leading to a city called Salem in search for a house which has no address. His name is Richard Wehrmeister, a cruel, though prosperous businessman. But he does not journey to town tonight for work. Upon reaching his destination, he raps three times on the door. It is answered by a young woman dressed in a deep black silk dress.

"Hurry, the meeting is about to begin," says the woman solemnly.

Swiftly he crosses to the other end of the house. As he enters a room, he gazes upon a huge fireplace. There are twelve people sitting before it, hypnotized by its gleaming flame. Richard joins the others and the meeting begins.

Rising to her feet a young woman stands before the roaring fire. Her name is Nancy Kovar. She is a woman of radiant beauty, but her heart reaps black evil. Kneeling down facing the fire, she speaks. "We are all present, master. We wait for any request you may make of us. We thirteen are yours to command!"

The fire roars higher and through its crackling flames Richard hears the voice from the beyond. "You, my loyal servants, keep me alive in your hearts. But when you perish, I will fade away. I can be given eternal life if you will complete but four tasks for me. The first is murder; the second robbery of a sacred object; the third is arson. The fourth is to remain a secret. It will be revealed only to the man here named Wehrmeister. Go now, and wait outside until he rejoins you. Begone!"

As the room clears, Richard hears the mysterious voice continue: "Mr. Wehrmeister. Come forward, closer to the flame. There is no need to be frightened for I live inside you After all, it was I who gave you economic power, wasn't it? Place your hand in the fire. Don't hesitate. Do it now!"

"AAARRRGGGHHH!" Richard screams in almost unbearable pain. Ten minutes later he emerges from the room with his hand hidden under his coat. "The master gave me his instructions. We begin tomorrow night. John Hutcheson, come forward! You will break into City Hall to steal the sacred black dagger. You will kill the guard." Pointing his bony finger at John, he continues, "then you will burn the building to the ground. The rest of you will meet us at the Skull Hill graveyard at midnight. I will meet you at nine, John." Without another word, he opens the door and vanishes into the inky darkness.

Next evening, John and Richard lurk in the shadows outside Salem's City Hall. "You know what to do," says Richard coldly.

John quickly runs across the street and silently opens a window. Making his way through the dark corridors, he finds the guard sleeping in a wooden chair. In a glass case beside him is the black dagger. The dagger is treasured as the first item traded with the red men. It is a totem of lasting friendship. John pulls a scarf from his neck and wraps it tightly in his hands. Like a panther, he moves behind his victim and swirls the scarf tightly around the guard's neck. He struggles, but it is useless as John clutches the scarf tighter until he suffocates. Breaking the case open, he siezes the dagger. Now making his way out, John races around the building setting fire to everything he finds. Hearing a crowd gathering outside, he makes a hasty exit through a window to the alley where Richard waits calmly.

"You did your job well. Come John. While the villagers try to halt the fire, we will proceed to Skull Hill. Hand me the dagger.

It is 11:45 when they reach the graveyard. John walks through the cemetery gate while Richards follows slowly behind. Suddenly, John is struck from behind and falls unconscious. Richard stands over him with his hand hidden in his coat.

"You accomplished your mission well. Now I must do mine for the master. His fourth command was . . . betrayal!"

Richard drags the body to the center of the graveyard as Nancy Kovar advances toward him.

"So this was our leader's fourth wish. Come quickly. Time runs short."

John's body is stretched out on a tombstone as the city bells strike midnight. Richard pulls his hand from beneath his coat striking John in the heart with the blade to unleash his evil soul.

"With this hand I give you life, creature of darkness. The rest of you—dance!"

The twelve that are left dance around the headstone Suddenly a burst of fire leaps from the handle of the dagger. For the first time they gaze on their master.

"He lives!"

"Our master lives!"

"I gave him life," thinks Richard Wehrmeister falling to one knee.

"O' mighty Satan, we all rejoice!"

No wonder they want to take Salem out of the country! Such goings-on! In the next story, Tom O'Boyle takes us on a little trip out of this world—on the flight of Apollo 29, an ill-fated trip if there ever was one! But first, take a look at David Hubb's version of our old pal, the Mummy. (Below) Pretty Eerie!

The following transmission was monitored as the five-man crew of Apollo 29 journed.

To The Ends of Inner Space

"Major, we are now more than 2,000,000 miles farther than man has ever gone. There still have not been any new planets, and our communications with earth is getting worse every minute. It could go any time now. We have to go back."

"But . . ."

"Sir, our radar has picked up sometimes large enough to be a space vehicle. It's nearly a thousand miles away."

"Roger. We are going to investigate."

"But we'll loose communication with the base."

"Tell them we won't be able to check in with them any more."

"Sorry sir, we've just lost contact."

"There it is, sir. Just ahead. Looks like some sort of bug."

"It looks like a germ blown all out of proportion."

"Sir! What's that shiny black object coming onto the screen. It's come from nowhere!"

"We're caught in a vacuum. We're being sucked toward it."

"It has a big hole in one end. We're headed right for it. Hey look, there's light coming through. Maybe we'll pass right through it."

"Steve, Tim. Prepare to leave the ship. You other two stay here. If we're not back in 15 minutes, get out of here without us."

"Dr. Zorcon! That blood sample on the microscope. I saw people in it!"

What? Are you crazy, Dr. Zixnan?"

"No, Doctor. Look for yourself!"

"You're right! This must be a medical first. Blood taken from this man contains people."

. . . Wait until they find out what those people contain! Too bad Vampirella didn't head the other way when she left her home planet. She'd think

Next time, we'll look for you on this page. Send your trash to Eerie / 22 E. 42nd Street / New York, N.Y. 10017.

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BIG 3" FULL-COLOR PIN

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FEED IT RAW BEEF! If there are no insects in your house you can feed the traps tiny slivers of raw beef. The plant will thrive on such food. When there is no food for the traps, the plant will feed normally through its root system.

EASY TO GROW! The VENUS FLY TRAP bulbs grow especially well in the home. They thrive in glass containers and will develop traps in 3 to 4 weeks. Each order includes 3 FLY TRAPS plus SPECIAL GROWING MATERIAL packed in a plastic bag. Only $1.00

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NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

ART BY JOE ORLANDO/SCRIPT BY ARCHIE GOODWIN

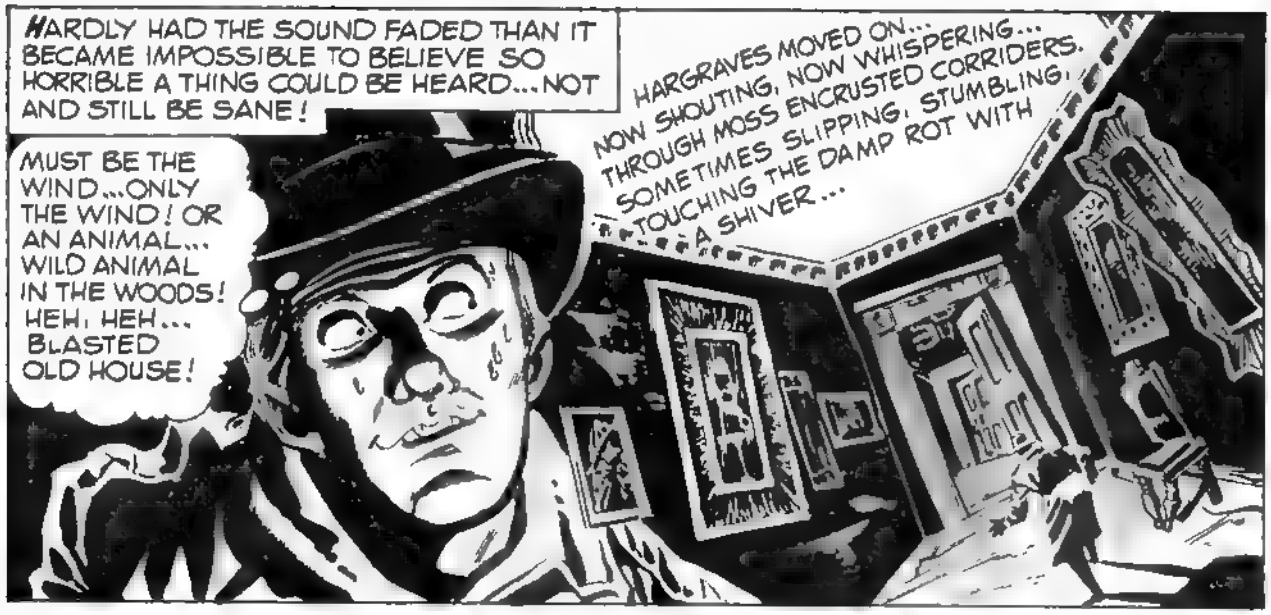
LOOK HERE! MY BROTHER LIVES THERE... HE'S EXPECTING ME! I'LL PAY--
MISTER, AIN'T NOBODY IN THIS COUNTY'D GO NEAR THAT PLACE! WARNED TH'OTHER FELLA WHEN I BRUNG 'IM OUT AN' I'M WARNING YOU!
LEE HARGRAVES WAS ANNOYED. ANNOYED BY THE WINDING DUSTY ROAD, THE HEAT OF THE LATE AFTERNOON SUN, THE SUPERSTITIOUS DRIVEL OF BACK COUNTRY NATIVES, AND ANNOYED BY THE IRRESPONSIBILITY OF A YOUNGER BROTHER WHO WAS CONSTANTLY CALLING FOR HELP...
LORD, WHAT A HORROR! HOW DOES HE GET INVOLVED IN THINGS LIKE THIS...
STILL, HIS TELEGRAM SOUNDED URGENT!
RICHARD!
HEY, RICHARD! BIG BROTHER'S HERE TO BAIL YOU OUT AGAIN!
HEY!
KER-RASH

WHAT THE DEVIL...
SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE! SHOULD HAVE REALIZED IT WHEN RICHARD DIDN'T MEET ME IN TOWN! I'LL FIND OUT WHAT IT IS...
...RIGHT NOW!

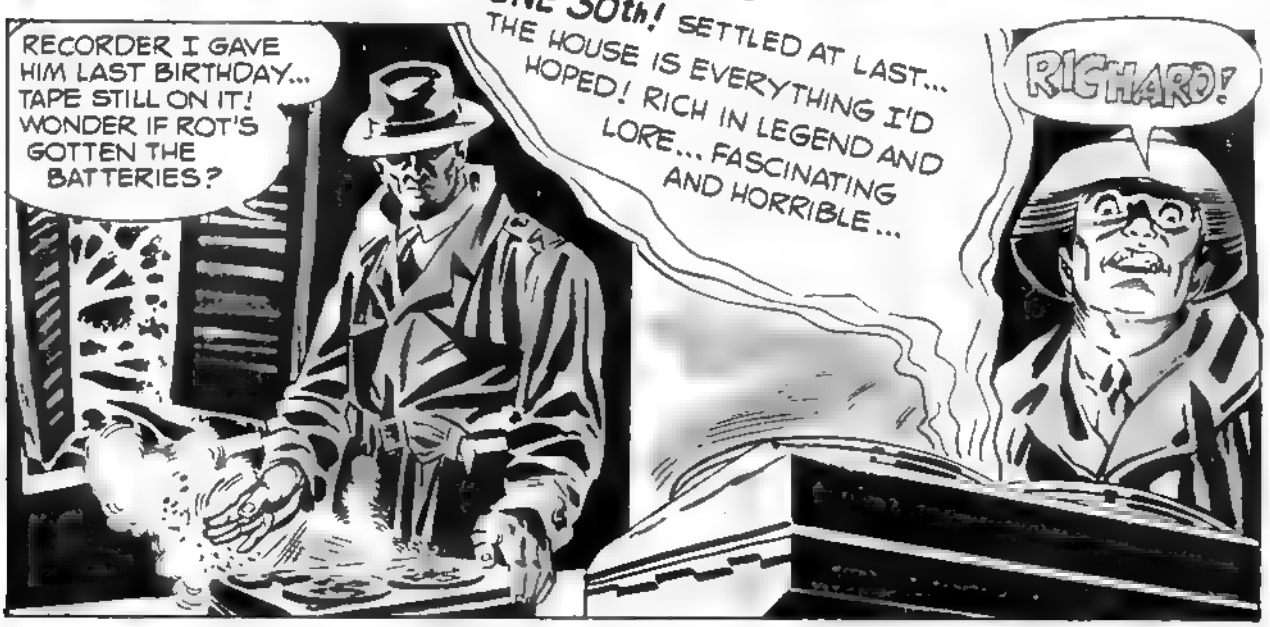
A MUSTY ODOR OF FETID DECAY MADE HARGRAVES WINCE AS HE PUSHED THROUGH COBWEBS TO THE MOSS-COATED INTERIOR OF THE ANCIENT STRUCTURE...
YOUNG FOOL! FANCIES HIMSELF A POE OR LOVE-CRAFT... WANTS TO WRITE IN ATMOSPHERE LIKE THIS!

OVER ROTTING CREAKING TIMBERS, HE MOVED THROUGH ROOM AFTER DECAYING ROOM, DISGUSTED, FASCINATED, AND SOMEWHAT UNEASY...
MUCK IS ALL OVER EVERYTHING...
RICHARD! WHERE ARE YOU, BOY? RICHARD!

GGGGAAROOOOOO


HARDLY HAD THE SOUND FADED THAN IT BECAME IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE SO HORRIBLE A THING COULD BE HEARD... NOT AND STILL BE SANE!
HARGRAVES MOVED ON... NOW SHOUTING, NOW WHISPERING... THROUGH MOSS ENCRUSTED CORRIDERS. SOMETIMES SLIPPING, STUMBLING, TOUCHING THE DAMP ROT WITH A SHIVER...
MUST BE THE WIND...ONLY THE WIND! OR AN ANIMAL... WILD ANIMAL IN THE WOODS! HEH, HEH... BLASTED OLD HOUSE!

HIS STUDY! DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE BEEN USED FOR A WHILE... DECAY'S SETTING IN HERE TOO!


JUNE 30th! SETTLED AT LAST... THE HOUSE IS EVERYTHING I'D HOPED! RICH IN LEGEND AND LORE... FASCINATING AND HORRIBLE...
RICHARD!
RECORDER I GAVE HIM LAST BIRTHDAY... TAPE STILL ON IT! WONDER IF ROT'S GOTTEN THE BATTERIES?

"BUILT IN 1790 BY THE JAPES FAMILY... A BARBAROUS CLAN OF MANIACS WHO PILLAGED THE COUNTRYSIDE, COMMITTING UNSPEAKABLE ACTS ON NEIGHBORS AND UNSUSPECTING TRAVELERS!"

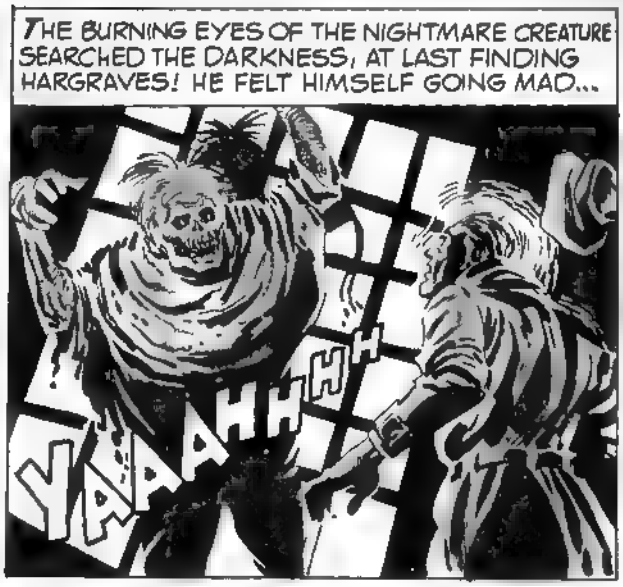
"FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY THEY INBRED AND FLOURISHED, BECOMING A SPAWN OF DEVIL WORSHIPPERS AND PRACTICIONERS OF MALIGNANT AND UNHOLY RITES..."

"NOT UNTIL 1848 DID AN OUTRAGED POPULACE SEND THE MILITIA UPON THEM, DESTROYING EVERY LIVING JAPES...BUT THE HOUSE, INTENDED TO BE BURNED TO THE GROUND, WAS SPARED..."

"A FEARFUL, ALMOST UNNATURAL RAINSTORM, PREVENTED THE ACTION! THE HOUSE OF EVIL WAS BOARDED UP AND LEFT STANDING... SOME SAY THE JAPES DEAD WERE LEFT INSIDE... LEFT TO DISSOLVE INTO THE VERY DECAY-RIDDEN TIMBERS OF THE HOUSE ITSELF!"

HARGRAVES TURNED OFF THE RECORDER HIS HAND TREMBLED. WITHOUT HIS REALIZING, IT HAD GROWN DARK...
WHY DOES RICHARD DWELL ON SUCH DRIVAL? GOD, I WISH THERE WERE LIGHTS IN THIS PLACE!
ON
OFF
ALMOST INVOLUNTARILY, HIS FINGER PUNCHED THE PLAY BUTTON... AGAIN RICHARD WAS SPEAKING... NO LONGER CAREFREE... VOICE TIGHTER, CHOKED...
JULY 3RD!
THIS WAS A MISTAKE... THERE'S EVIL IN THIS HOUSE! THE JAPES HAVE NEVER LOST THEIR HOLD...
A NOISE! DOWNSTAIRS! SOMETHING MOVING...
CLOSER! GETTING CLOSER...
THE RECORDER! IT CAN HEAR THE #@!%* TAPE!
THEIR HORROR LURKS... WAITING, STALKING... CLOSER, CLOSER... TO ITS PREY!
CLICK!

AAAAGARHHHH

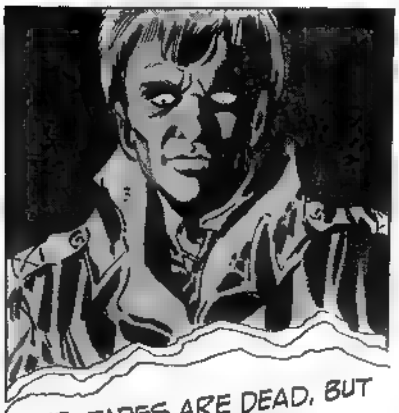

THE BURNING EYES OF THE NIGHTMARE CREATURE SEARCHED THE DARKNESS, AT LAST FINDING HARGRAVES! HE FELT HIMSELF GOING MAD...
YAAAHHH

CRUMBLING AND FETID, IT SLITHERED, STUMBLED FORWARD... HARGRAVES WAS STILL SCREAMING AS HE SEIZED THE ONLY THING CLOSE AT HAND...

SPLOP!

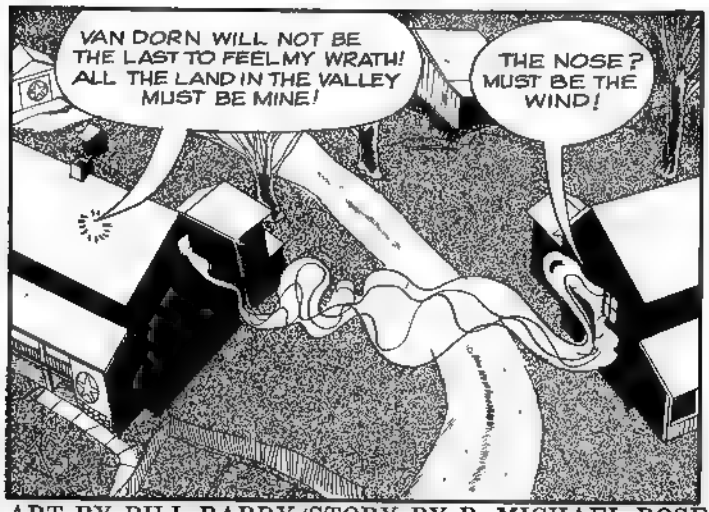
LIKE A MAN IN A NIGHTMARE, HARGRAVES CRIED AND SHOUTED, PUMMELED AND KICKED, SMASHING, STOMPING, DESTROYING...
MY BROTHER... RICHARD... YOU KILLED MY BROTHER... MY...

EXHAUSTON BROUGHT AN END. A BLACK BUBBLING SMEAR STRETCHED BEFORE HIM, THE HINT OF A HEAD WITHIN IT, THE DYING COALS OF FLAME EYES... SOMEWHERE, THE RECORDER TALKED ON... RICHARD'S VOICE, NOW RASPING, CROAKING...



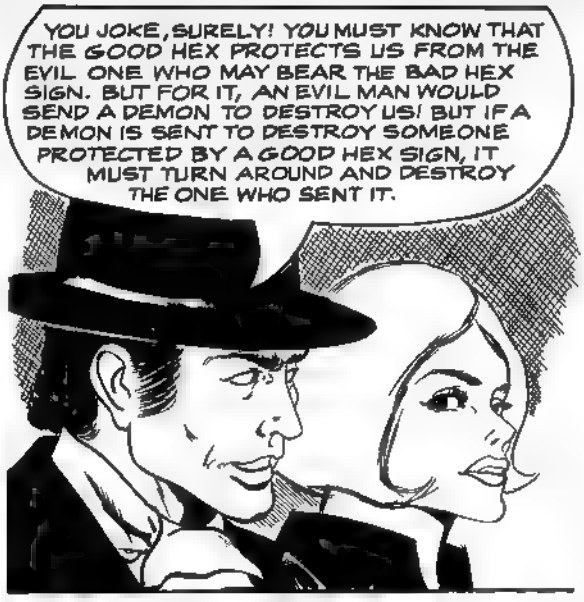
THE TIME FOR SCREAMING WAS PAST. HARGRAVES STARED OUT AT THE OOZING BLACK SLIME WHICH WAS ONCE HIS BROTHER, STARED OUT PAST THE HANDS THAT KILLED HIM... ALREADY, BITS OF MOLD AND FUNGUS WERE BEGINNING TO FORM!

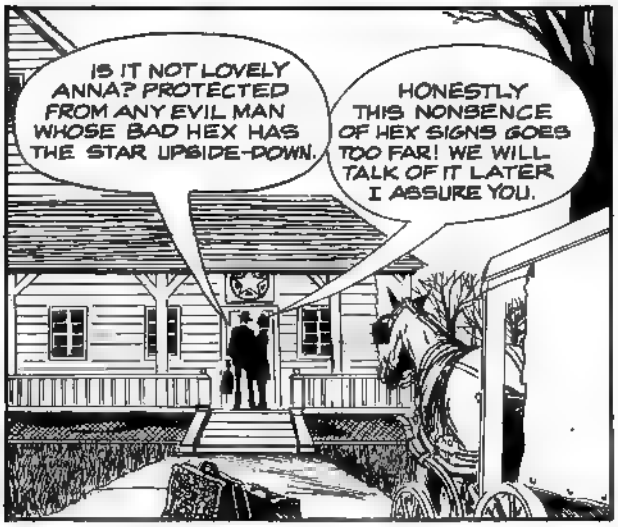
HEX MARKS THE SPOT



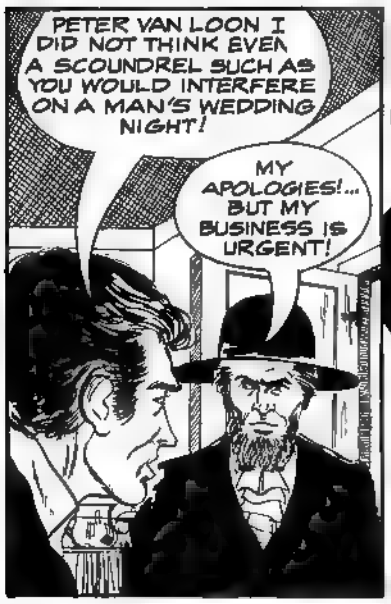
ART BY BILL BARRY/STORY BY R. MICHAEL ROSEN

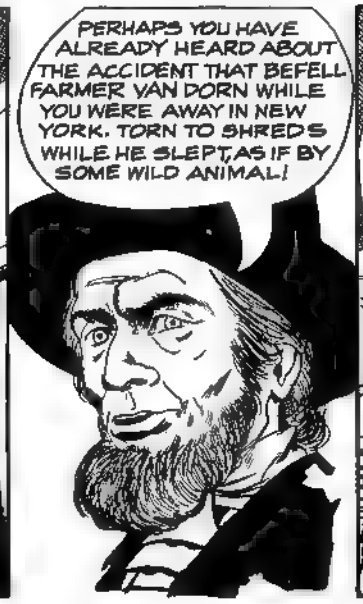
WE WILL LIVE A SIMPLE BUT HAPPY LIFE, ANNA! I WILL FARM, YOU WILL COOK AND KEEP HOUSE, WE WILL ATTEND CHURCH AND KEEP UP THE PROTECTIVE HEX! YOU SHALL SEE IT IS SO, MY NEW WIFE.
IT'S WHAT I WANT HENDRICK. HERE I CAN ENJOY LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES! BUT WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A HEX?

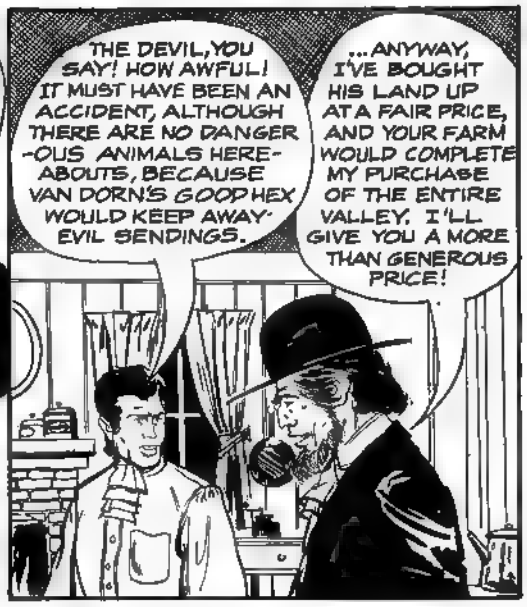

YOU JOKE, SURELY! YOU MUST KNOW THAT THE GOOD HEX PROTECTS US FROM THE EVIL ONE WHO MAY BEAR THE BAD HEX SIGN. BUT FOR IT, AN EVIL MAN WOULD SEND A DEMON TO DESTROY US! BUT IF A DEMON IS SENT TO DESTROY SOMEONE PROTECTED BY A GOOD HEX SIGN, IT MUST TURN AROUND AND DESTROY THE ONE WHO SENT IT.


IS IT NOT LOVELY ANNA? PROTECTED FROM ANY EVIL MAN WHOSE BAD HEX HAS THE STAR UPSIDE-DOWN.
HONESTLY THIS NONSENCE OF HEX SIGNS GOES TOO FAR! WE WILL TALK OF IT LATER I ASSURE YOU.

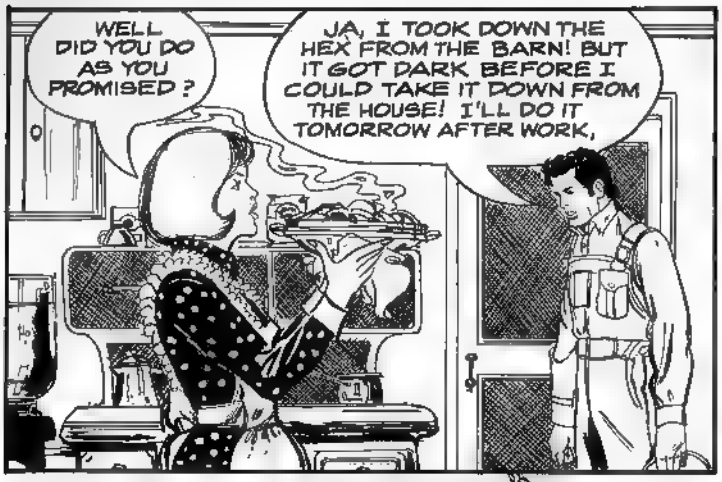
NOT THE FOOD I AM ACCUSTOMED TO, BUT DELICIOUS! I DID WELL TO CHOOSE YOU AS MY WIFE!
AND I CHOSE WELL TOO... IF ONLY YOU'D FORGET ABOUT THAT HEX SILLINESS... NOW WHO CAN BE KNOCKING
KNOCK KNOCK


PETER VAN LOON I DID NOT THINK EVEN A SCOUNDREL SUCH AS YOU WOULD INTERFERE ON A MAN'S WEDDING NIGHT!
MY APOLOGIES!... BUT MY BUSINESS IS URGENT!


PERHAPS YOU HAVE ALREADY HEARD ABOUT THE ACCIDENT THAT BEFELL FARMER VAN DORN WHILE YOU WERE AWAY IN NEW YORK. TORN TO SHREDS WHILE HE SLEPT, AS IF BY SOME WILD ANIMAL!


THE DEVIL, YOU SAY! HOW AWFUL! IT MUST HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO DANGER-OUS ANIMALS HERE-ABOUTS, BECAUSE VAN DORN'S GOOD HEX WOULD KEEP AWAY EVIL SENDINGS.
...ANYWAY, I'VE BOUGHT HIS LAND UP AT A FAIR PRICE, AND YOUR FARM WOULD COMPLETE MY PURCHASE OF THE ENTIRE VALLEY. I'LL GIVE YOU A MORE THAN GENEROUS PRICE!

THE NEXT EVENING...


WELL DID YOU DO AS YOU PROMISED?
JA, I TOOK DOWN THE HEX FROM THE BARN! BUT IT GOT DARK BEFORE I COULD TAKE IT DOWN FROM THE HOUSE! I'LL DO IT TOMORROW AFTER WORK,

THE FOOL!

HE'S TAKEN THE HEX SIGN OFF THE BARN! I STILL CAN'T GET AT HIS HOUSE, BUT PERHAPS SOME REALLY BAD LUCK WILL MAKE HIM SELL!

... OH, FORCES OF EVIL! HEAR ME AND DO MY BIDDING! FARMER STUYVESENT'S BARN IS UNPROTECTED! BUT STAY AWAY FROM HIS HOUSE FOR IT STILL BEARS THE HEX SIGN PROTECTOR, AND I'VE NO WISH TO HAVE THE DARK FORCES RETURN TO CLAIM ME!

I'M FRIGHTENED! NOT FOR MYSELF, BUT FOR YOU!
NOTHING WILL HAPPEN! YOU'LL SEE! THANK ME FOR ... WHAT'S THAT LIGHT OUTSIDE?

... IT'S THE BARN! IT'S BURNING! I KNEW IT! EVIL BEFELL IT AS SOON AS THE HEX WAS REMOVED! NOW DO YOU BELIEVE?
NO! I DON'T!

THIS IS A FIRE... AND THAT'S ALL IT IS! A PERFECTLY NATURAL ACCIDENT! THERE ARE NO DEMONS AND DEVILS HERE! IF THERE ARE SHOW THEM TO ME
BUT SURELY, NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN WHAT HAS HAPPENED, YOU DON'T WANT ME TO REMOVE THE HEX FROM THE HEX FROM THE HOUSE!

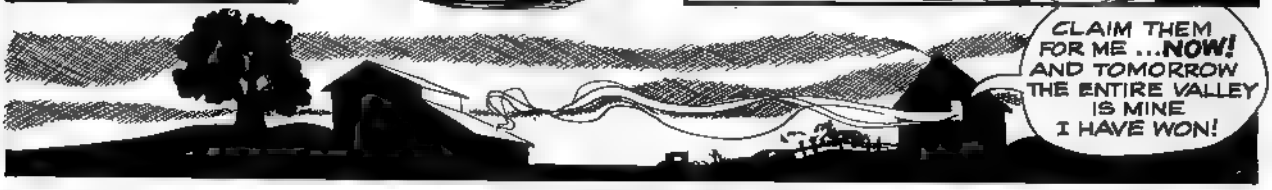
I WANT IT REMOVED MORE THAN EVER! YOU PROMISED TO DO IT TOMORROW ...SO BE IT!

THE NEXT DAY.
YES DARLING! I WILL KEEP MY PROMISE AND REMOVE THE HEX SIGN AS SOON AS I FINISH CUTTING THIS WHEAT FIELD! I MUST FINISH IT TODAY.
ALL RIGHT HENDRICK! BUT SEE THAT YOU DO IT!

WELL THE WHEAT IS FINISHED. NOTHING TO DO NOW BUT REMOVE THE HEX SIGN AND PRAY FOR THE BEST!

SO THE FOOL HASN'T LEARNED! HE REMOVED THE HEX SIGN FROM THE HOUSE AS WELL! VERY WELL... HE SHALL SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS VAN DORN! AND HIS WIFE ALSO! TONIGHT!

OH DEMON OF DARKNESS! TONIGHT I SEND YOU ONCE AGAIN TO DESTROY MY ENEMY! HE HAS SHED HIS HEX. SO, I ORDER YOU TO CLAIM FARMER STUYVESENT AND HIS WIFE! DO MY BIDDING!


CLAIM THEM FOR ME ...NOW! AND TOMORROW THE ENTIRE VALLEY IS MINE I HAVE WON!

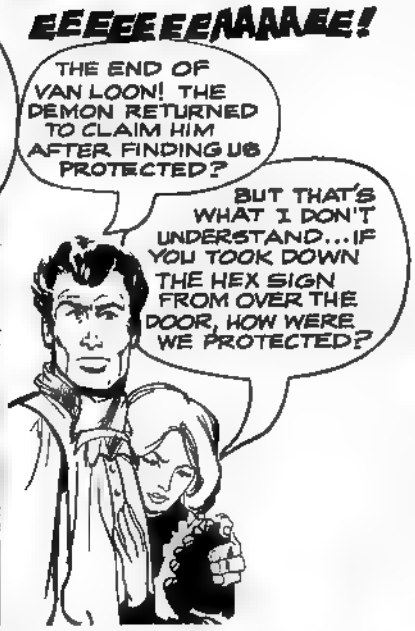
IT...IT IS A DEMON! YOU WERE RIGHT! OH LORD, NO!
YOU MAY NOT HARM US! WE ARE PROTECTED BY THE GOOD HEX SIGN!
HAS YOUR FATE ADDLED YOUR BRAIN? YOU REMOVED THE FROM YOUR DOOR! YOU HAVE NO PROTECTION.

AH, BUT YOU ARE WRONG! LOOK AROUND YOU AND SEE OUR PROTECTION FOR YOURSELF.

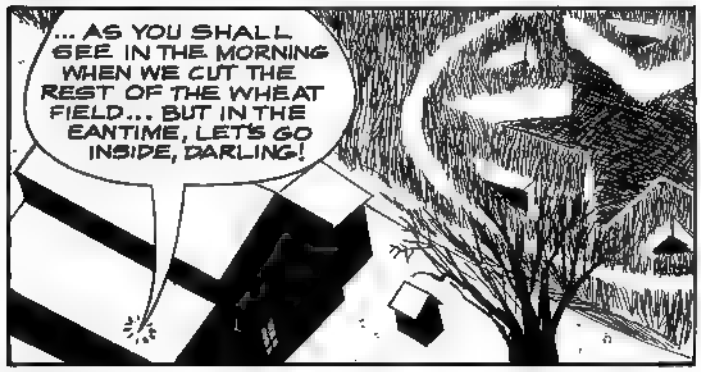
SO... I HAVE BEEN SENT TO CLAIM ONE WHO IS PROTECTED! MY DUTY IS CLEAR! I MUST INSTEAD CLAIM HE WHO SENT ME!

IT SHOULD BE OVER NOW, AND I'LL OWN THE ENTIRE VALLEY AND... BUT WHY HAS THE DEMON RETURNED HERE? HAVE YOU ALREADY CLAIMED THE UNPROTECTED ONE?

YOU WERE IN ERROR! HE HAD PROTECTION! SO I MUST CLAIM YOU!
NO IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I SAW HIM REMOVE THE HEX MYSELF. NO! NO!


EEEEEEEAAAEE!
THE END OF VAN LOON! THE DEMON RETURNED TO CLAIM HIM AFTER FINDING US PROTECTED?
BUT THAT'S WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND... IF YOU TOOK DOWN THE HEX SIGN FROM OVER THE DOOR, HOW WERE WE PROTECTED?

AH... BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO MAKE A HEX SIGN!


... AS YOU SHALL SEE IN THE MORNING WHEN WE CUT THE REST OF THE WHEAT FIELD... BUT IN THE EANTIME, LET'S GO INSIDE, DARLING!

VAN LOON WOULD'VE GONE LOONY IF HE'D SEEN WHEAT WAS OUT IN THE IELD EnT ANYWAY, HENDRICK DEMONSTRATED A HEXCELLENT IDEA! JUST A CURSEORY GLANCE WOULD TELL YOU THAT HE'LL WEAR THE PANTS IN HIS FAMILY FROM NOW ON!
END

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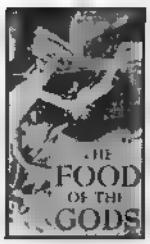

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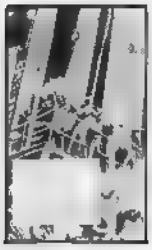

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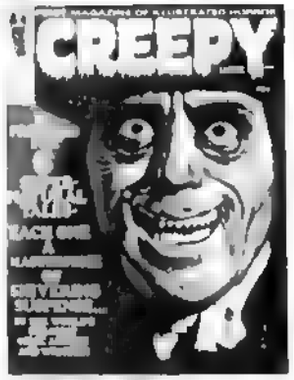

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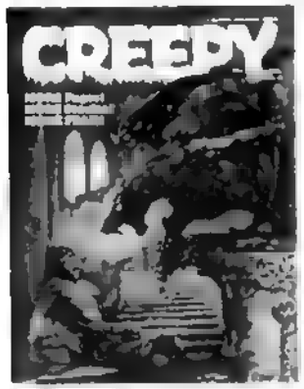

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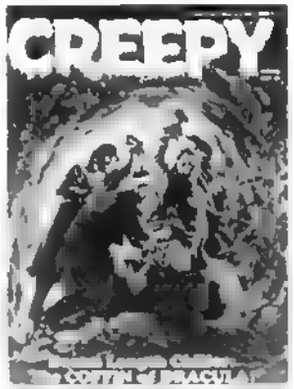

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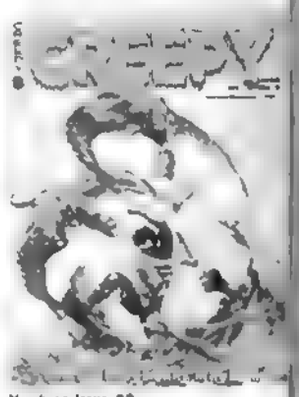

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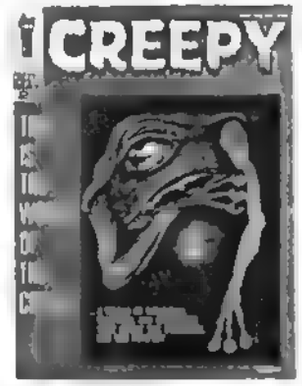

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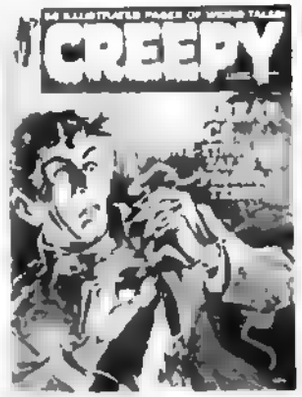

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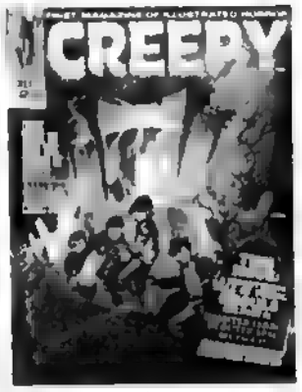

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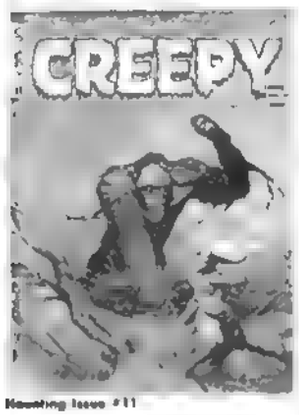

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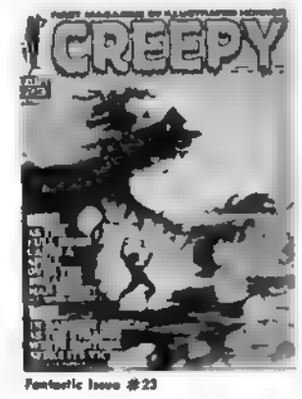

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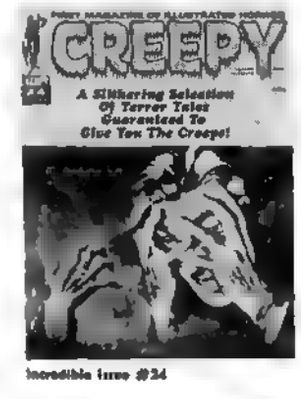

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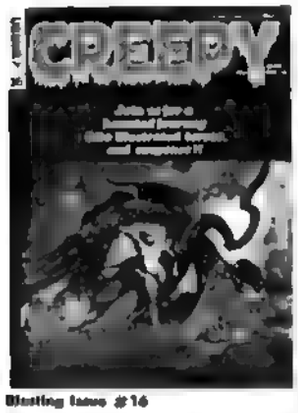

Blasting Issue #16

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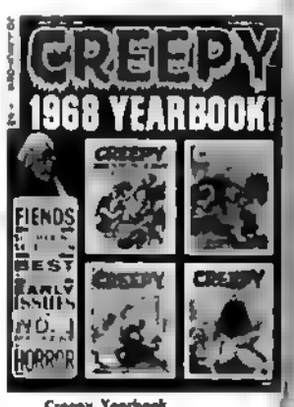
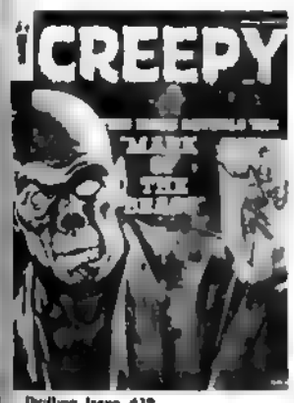


Creepy Yearbook



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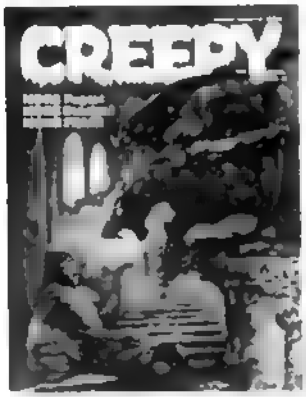

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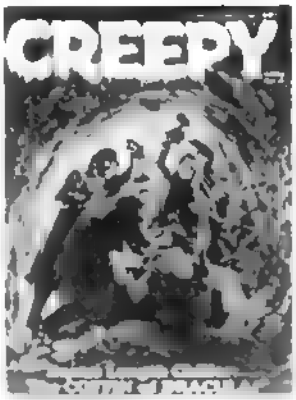

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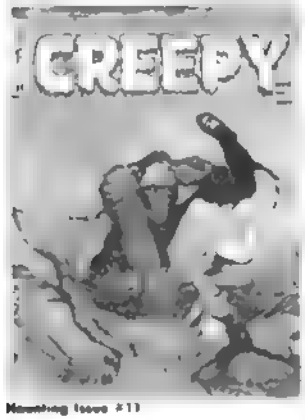

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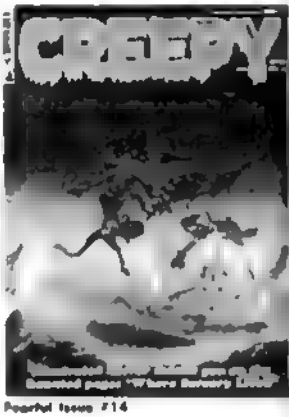

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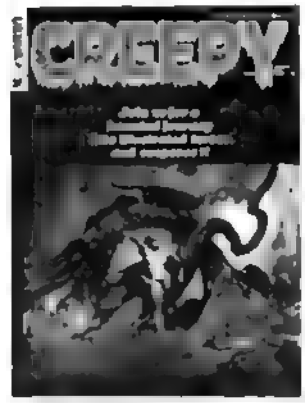

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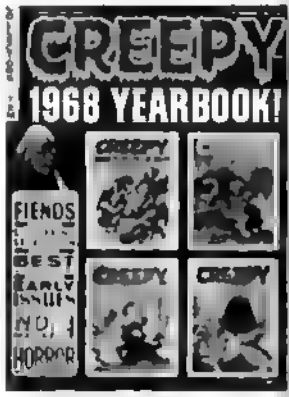

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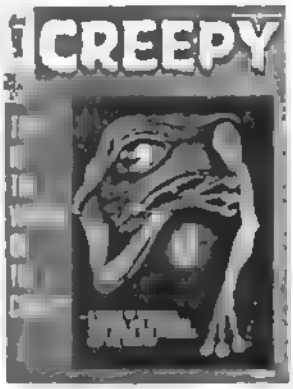

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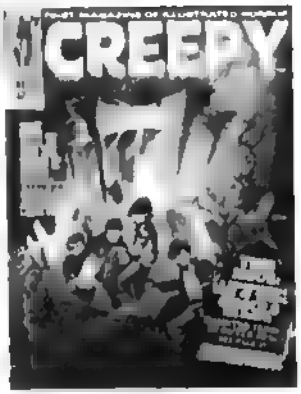

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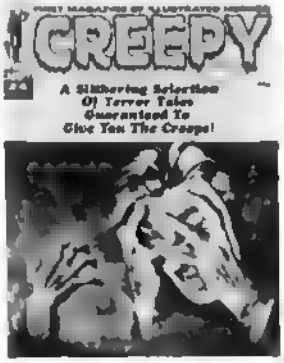

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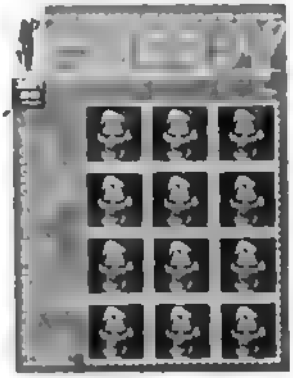
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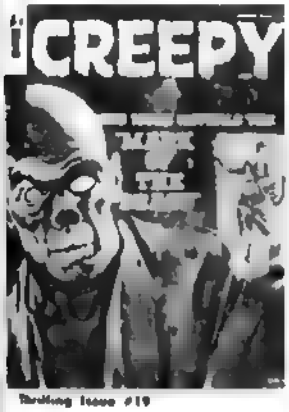

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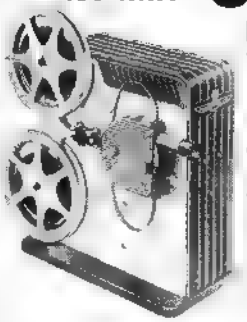

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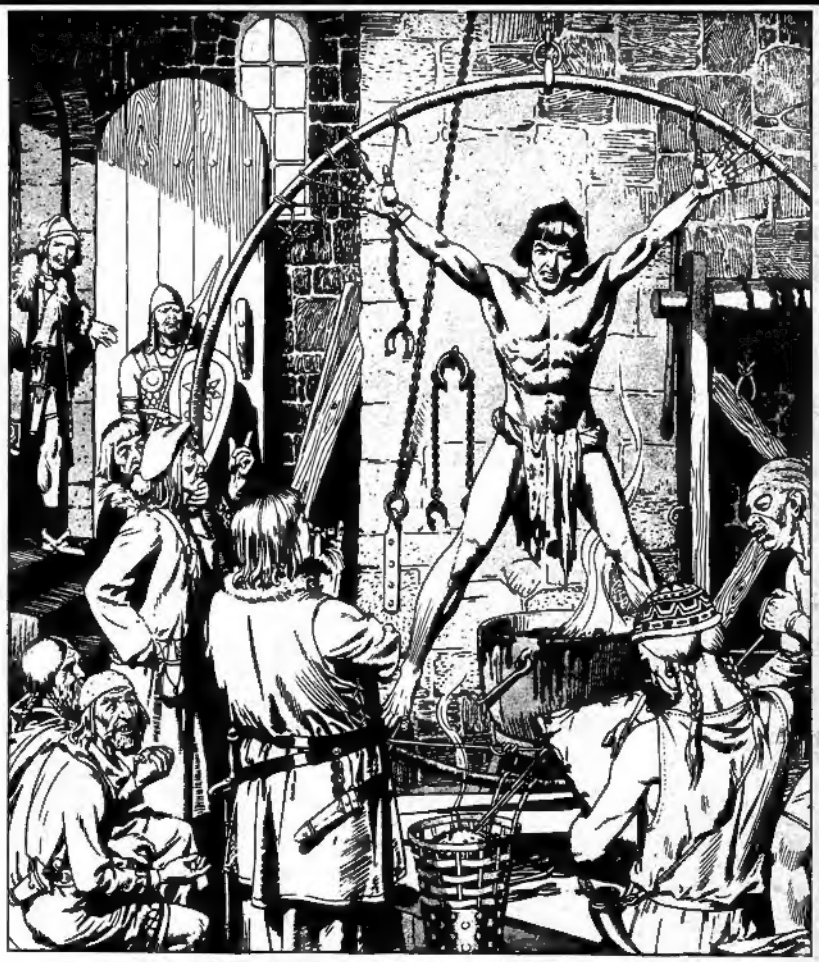

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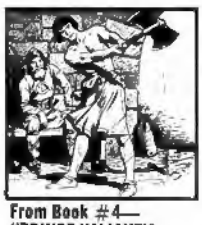

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